NUMBER 24
SUMMER 1996
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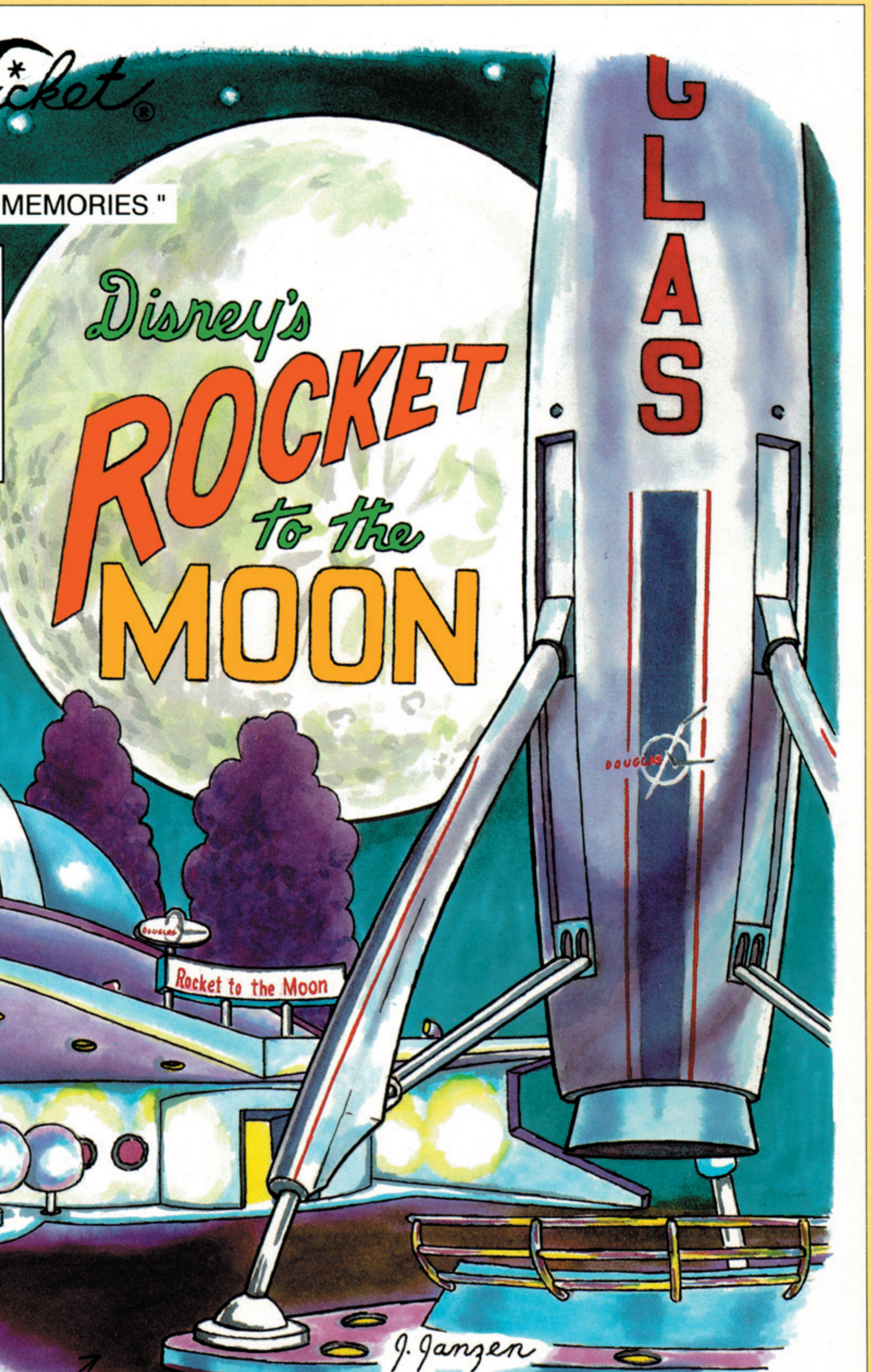
The E Ticket®

" COLLECTING THEME PARK MEMORIES "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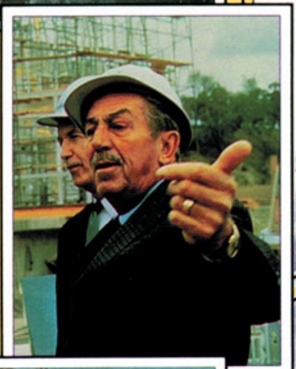

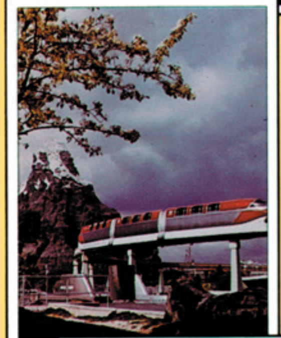

Disney's Man In Space ...
WARD KIMBALL

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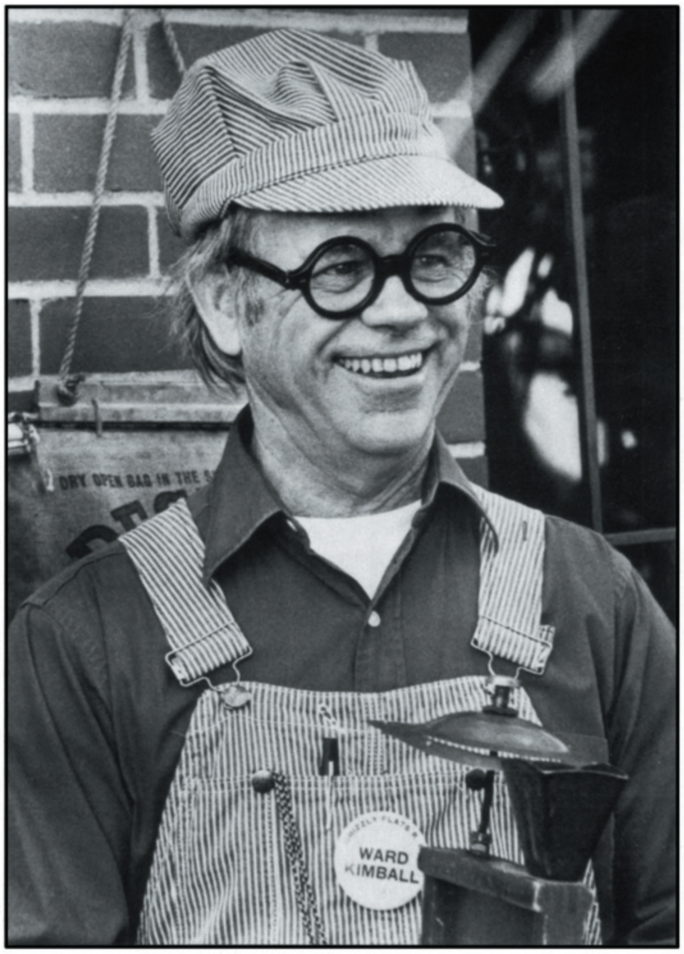
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WARD KIMBALL

WELCOME ... welcome to Issue #24 of The "E" Ticket. The decade of the 1950's was, among other things, known for its public fascination with outer space. This interest was, at first, limited to science fiction books and magazines, monster movies and children's television. By the end of the 50's, the space race with the Soviets had begun and much science fiction had become fact. America's growing acceptance of space travel as a serious possibility was greatly influenced by Walt Disney and his team of creative artists. The first Tomorrowland television shows created a sensation which ultimately reached the White House and the Pentagon. We're very proud to feature a conversation on this topic with the man who initiated, produced and directed these films ... Disney's foremost "man in space," Ward Kimball.

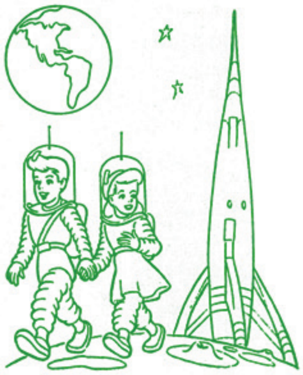
During this same timeframe, John Hench and his WED team were hard at work on Tomorrowland's principal attraction, the **Rocket To The Moon**. For this issue's cover story, we attempt the complete and illustrated tale of Walt Disney's Anaheim entry in the race to the moon. Join us as we view, once more, the wonders of interplanetary space on the **Moonliner Rocket's** upper and lower scanner screens.

Imagineer and illustrator Sam McKim provided an artistic focal point for many ideas and concepts later realized at the Disney Parks. His visualizations of ride concepts, show structures and entire "lands" gave ride designers an advance look at their plans, in finished perspective. Here are some of his rarely seen illustrations of a changing Disneyland.

We've got two new things happening we hope will make ordering/subscribing to The "E" Ticket a little easier: 1) we can now accept Visa and MasterCard. For maximum speed, you can FAX your bankcard info to us at: **(818) 368-8701**; 2) we're working out the details for a website on the Internet (**www.the-e-ticket.com**). Take a look...

SPACEPORT BULLETIN

Thanks this time to Don Bertino, Donald Laird and Clem Patafio for their answers and other input. Thanks again to Robert Tieman, Rebecca Cline, Renie Bardeau, and Ed Squair. Crucial information and rare Disney space material was shared by John Hench, Dug Miller, Mike Cozart, David Mumford and Roberta Brubaker. Dave Smith's earlier research helped get this issue off the ground, and Sam McKim again went digging into that treasure trove of his. The biggest thanks goes to Ward and Betty Kimball. Their memories, patience and hard work made the *Man In Space* story something we're very proud of.



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The "E" Ticket is published between 3 and 4 times a year ... an objective which, like the moon, appears distant and unreachable as obstacles, much like gravity, pull us backward. Fortunately, loyal readers provide the propellant (action/reaction) to launch each new issue. Subscriptions are still only $22 for 4 issues, postpaid, in envelopes. You may obtain a sample issue by sending a check in the amount of $7 ($6 plus $1 postage/handling) to:

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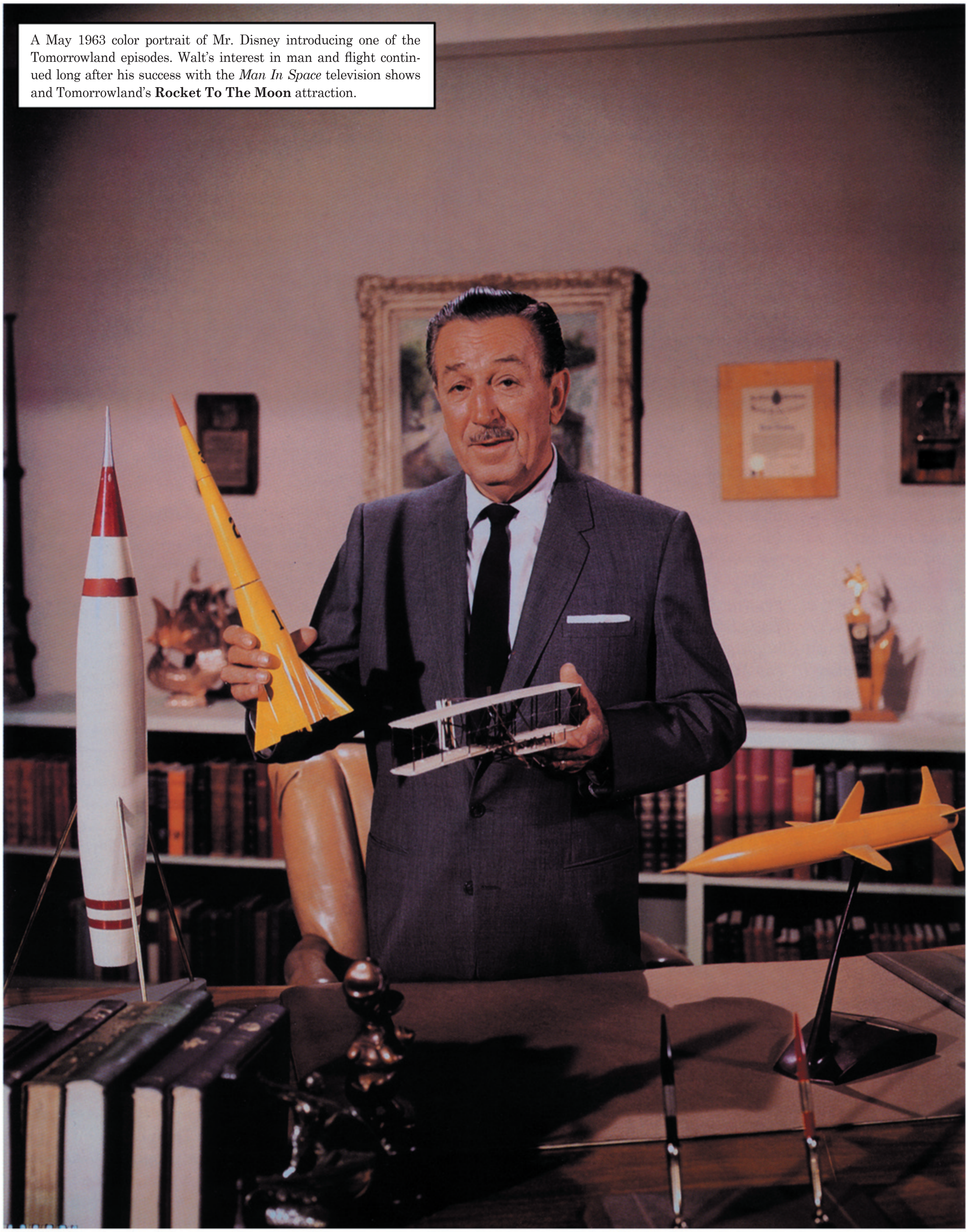


A May 1963 color portrait of Mr. Disney introducing one of the Tomorrowland episodes. Walt's interest in man and flight continued long after his success with the *Man In Space* television shows and Tomorrowland's **Rocket To The Moon** attraction.

Walt Disney's Man In Space...

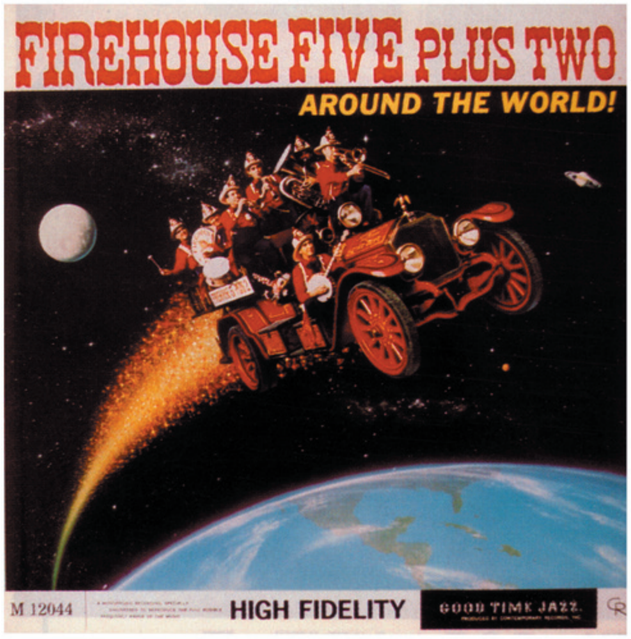
WARD KIMBALL

Ward Kimball's 40 year career with the Disney Studio is probably unique in its diversity. In 1934, Walt Disney hired him as an in-betweener, then as Assistant Animator, on the strength of his portfolio (he was the first artist to bring one). After work on the ***Silly Symphonies****, Ward served as Animator on* ***Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*** *then as Animating Supervisor for the Jiminy Cricket character for* ***Pinocchio****. By the late forties, Kimball was one of Walt's "nine old men," but he was also known to Walt and others at the Studio for his outside interests. His personal collection of steam locomotives and railroad equipment (both full size and toy size) and the famous Dlxieland jazz band, the Firehouse Five Plus Two are well known examples.*

Kimball's tendency to experiment with both humor and animation had been seen in films like ***Dumbo****,* ***The Three Caballeros****,* ***Melody*** *(the first in 3D) and the first Cinemascope film,* ***Toot, Whistle, Plunk and Boom*** *... which brought the Studio an Academy Award in 1953. With construction underway on the new "family park," Disneyland, Walt Disney moved into television with his weekly program, also called* ***Disneyland****, on ABC. Television programs (with their low budgets, tight production deadlines and limited animation) were very different from Disney films of the past. In 1954, Kimball was approached by Walt Disney to write, produce and direct the initial Tomorrowland segments for the* ***Disneyland*** *T.V. series. During this period, Walt was planning an attraction at Disneyland ... a trip on* ***The Rocket To The Moon****. Ward Kimball and his team worked to create Tomorrowland's* ***Man In Space*** *television productions ... programs with an unexpected impact that would eventually help awaken America to the importance of space exploration.*

THE "E" TICKET: Ward, what do you think of our tentative title for this interview?

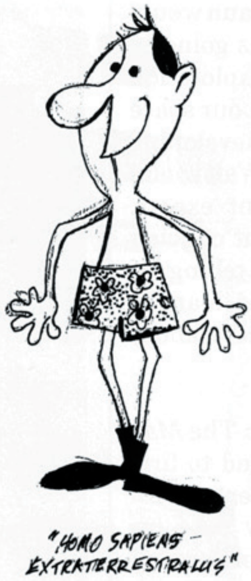
WARD KIMBALL: It should say *"Spaced Out Ward Kimball!"* (laughter) Anyway, this all started when Walt came to me about the Tomorrowland shows, and I gave him the now famous articles that had appeared in *Collier's Magazine* the year before. These articles were by the foremost space experts of the time (Willy Ley, Heinz Haber, Wernher von Braun and illustrator Chesley Bonestell) and I had been very interested in them. Walt came back later and said, "This is the way to go ... this is not science fiction, this is 'science factual' ... we know these things, so let's get Von Braun and the others out here!" He even wanted Chesley Bonestell, until we found out what it would cost if he painted a background. We used our own artists, and just imitated Chesley. *Man In Space* was going to be a single show, to begin with, for the Tomorrowland segment of the Wednesday evening *Disneyland* program. Walt was all set with animated material for Fantasyland, he had historical Frontierland stuff like *Davy Crockett* and *Pecos Bill*, and the *True Life Adventure* films ... the Disney film archives were filled with these things ... but he had nothing for Tomorrowland.

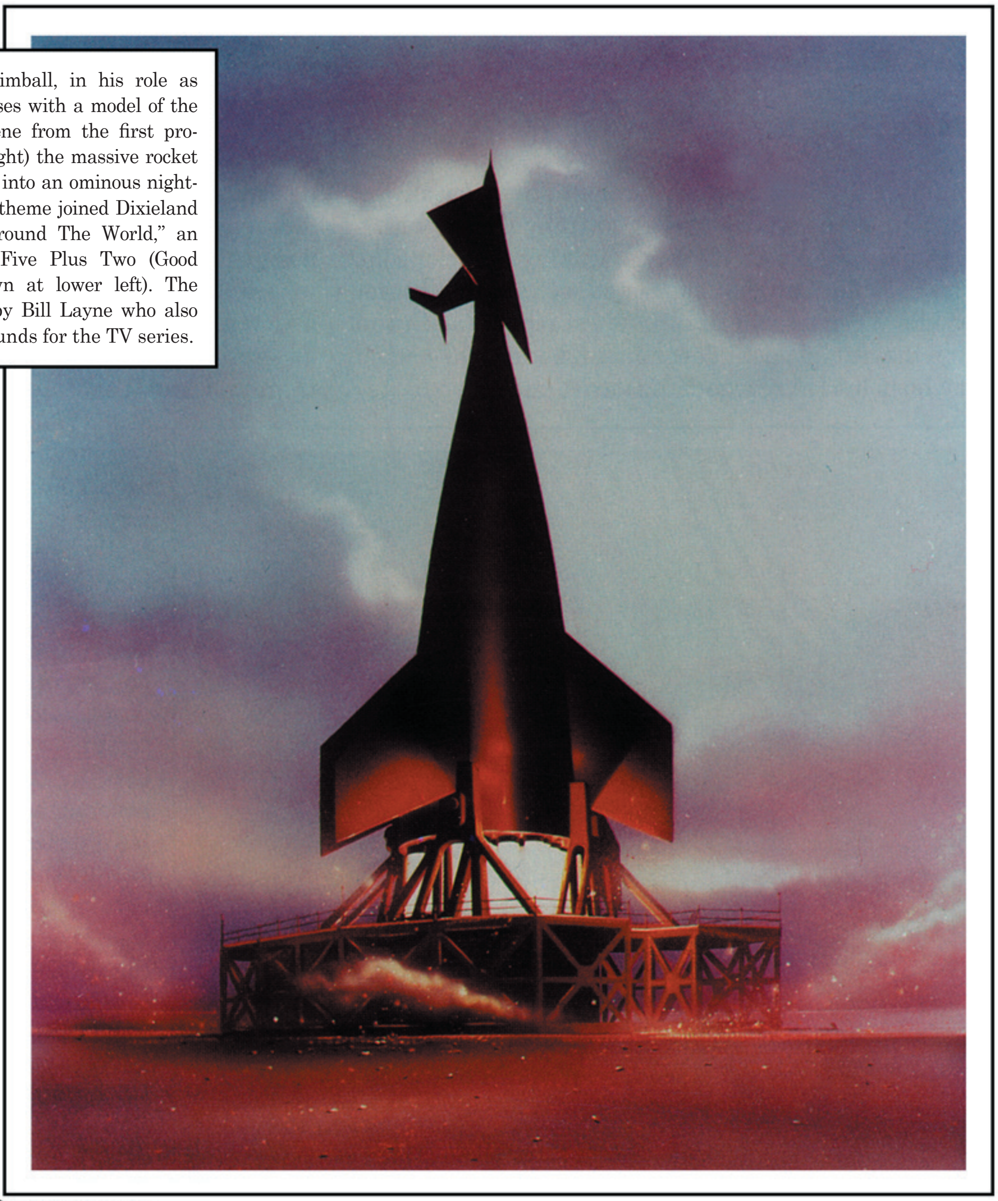


We got to work, and pretty soon we had filled up two big "director's rooms" with pictures and material to work on. We had the walls covered with so much artwork that Walt decided we had enough for three shows. He came in to see how the program was going, and he said, "You've got enough to shoot two shows here." And then, in our next meeting, he said, "Hey ... you've got three shows here ... end up with the *Mars* thing!" He was looking for material to bolster his overall television plan at that point. Even with three shows we weren't able to do it as thoroughly as we wanted.

Man In Space was first broadcast on March 9, 1955, and it was the first Tomorrowland show hosted by Walt Disney. It was 48 minutes long, cost $250,000 to produce, and was shown three more times that same year. The second show, *Man And The Moon* (later called *Tomorrow The Moon*), was shown on December 28, 1955 with the third show, *Mars And Beyond*, on December 4, 1957. The *Moon* picture cost $350,000 and the *Mars* show cost $450,000, because costs had gone up by then. This was expensive television, but Walt let us spend that kind of money because he didn't have to spend a dime on programs for the other three "lands." It was for Tomorrowland that he had to create all the new programming. Walt had decided that was the only way to do it, knew what it would cost, and didn't kick about it. Then, on October 4, 1957, the Soviets fired Sputnik into space and this surprise upset the plans that everybody was making. That was two months before we showed *Mars And Beyond*.

Producer/Director Ward Kimball, in his role as *Man In Space* narrator, poses with a model of the four-stage rocket. In a scene from the first program, *Man In Space*, (at right) the massive rocket begins its animated launch into an ominous nighttime sky. The space travel theme joined Dixieland music on the cover of "Around The World," an album by the Firehouse Five Plus Two (Good Time Jazz, M12044, shown at lower left). The background painting was by Bill Layne who also did the animation backgrounds for the TV series.





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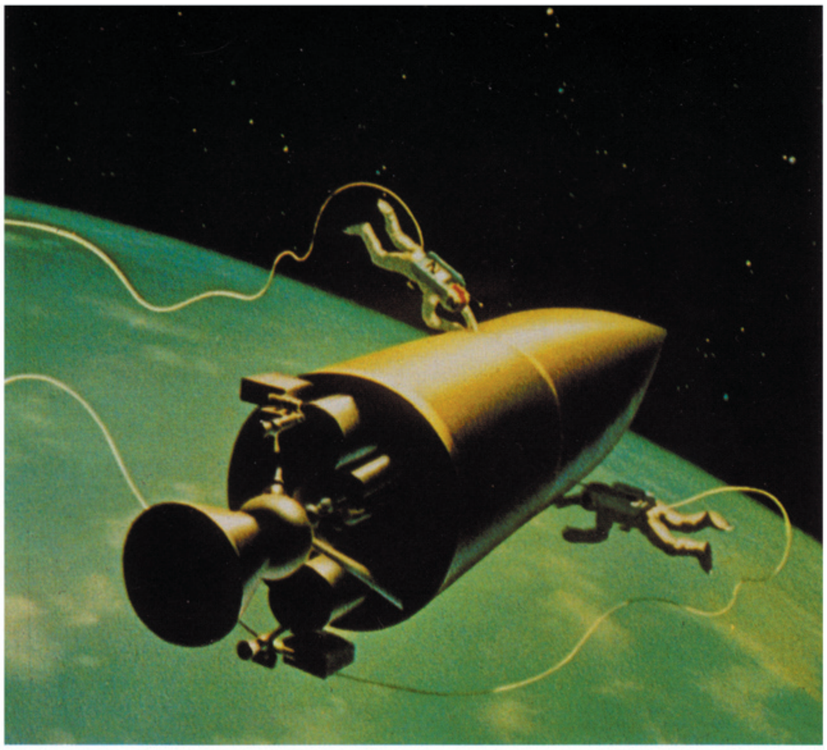
THE “E” TICKET: Tell us about recruiting the German scientists for the Studio. Did Wernher von Braun bring that four-stage rocket with him?

KIMBALL: No, he had made rough designs, but we had the final model built in the Studio wood shop. It was that model, shown in *Man In Space*, that correctly predicted today’s Space Shuttle. I had quite a fight over that Von Braun rocket model, with the Studio paint department. We were one day away from shooting the opening scenes with the model, and it was all turned and finished and ready to be painted. The head of the paint department at the time was this skeptical old guy, and I went in there and asked, “Where’s the rocket? We’re going to be shooting tomorrow ... what the Hell is the matter with you, anyway?” And he said, “Well, you don’t really think they’re going to put a man into space?” He rolled up his sleeve and mockingly said, “Give me a shot of that stuff you guys are using.” Still protesting, he finished painting the rocket and barely got it over to us in time for the filming.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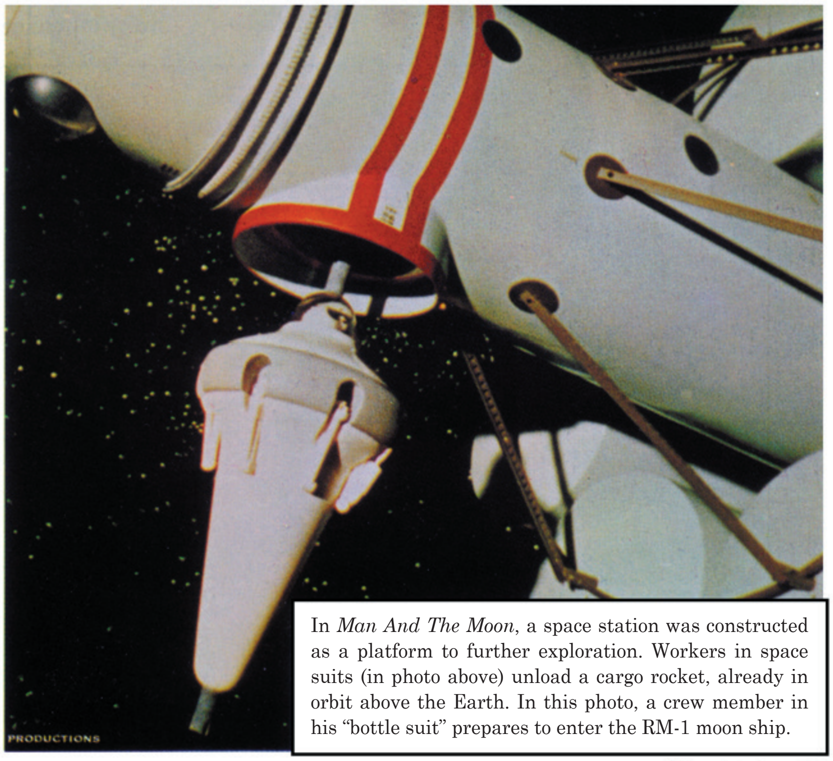
We found Willy Ley because his name was on all the science fiction books. He was an anthropologist, with a photographic memory. He was a walking encyclopedia, and it was Willy Ley that suggested we talk to a rocket expert like Wernher von Braun. We reached Von Braun through the Studio talent department, because he had an agent who helped him negotiate salaries and so forth. Ley was the one who provided the scientific facts, but most of the designs for the rockets and satellites were Von Braun’s. He did some very rough design sketches. From these, final designs were developed by Ken O’Connor and I don’t know where those sketches are now. I remember that I had an article all about what the Russians were doing in their space program pinned up on my bulletin board. Von Braun stood there and read the whole thing, and then he turned to me and said, “Well, Ward, we’d better get busy!” This was just before the launching of Russia’s Sputnik. Von Braun was a fascinating guy to talk to. Walt really liked to sit down with him and ask a long list of questions. Von Braun would describe what was going to happen in future exploration of space, and what our space scientists were developing here in America. Walt would become an instant expert. He’d get a kick out of going around the Studio telling everyone what he’d learned from the space experts about the future.

THE “E” TICKET: The *Man In Space* shows had to first educate the audience with concepts we now take for granted. You spelled out



In *Man And The Moon*, a space station was constructed as a platform to further exploration. Workers in space suits (in photo above) unload a cargo rocket, already in orbit above the Earth. In this photo, a crew member in his “bottle suit” prepares to enter the RM-1 moon ship.

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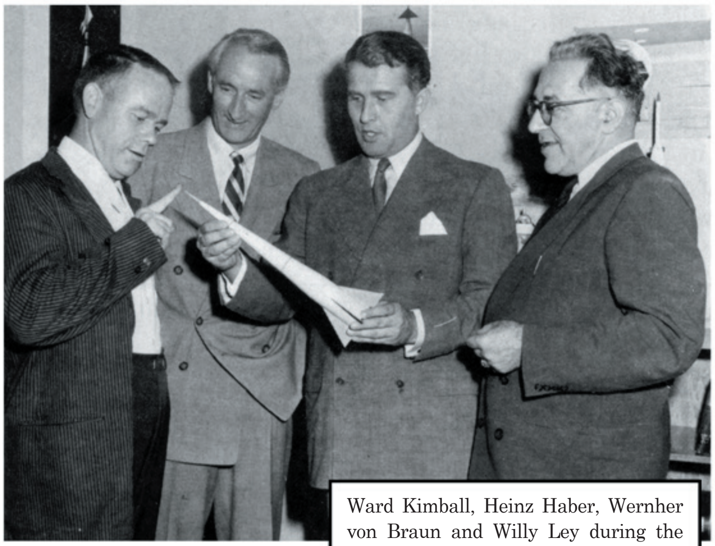
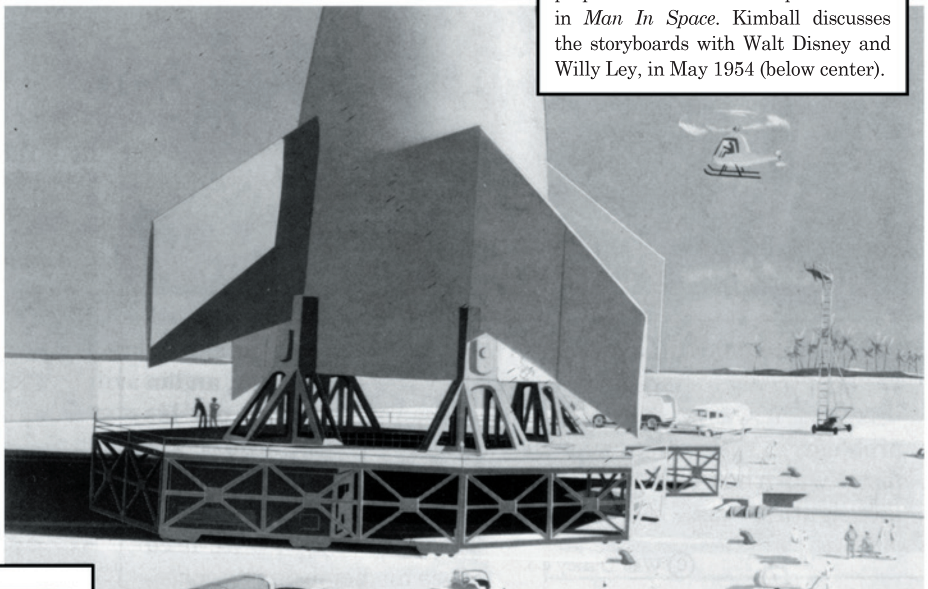
ideas like weightlessness, how a rocket motor works, how it maintains an orbit circling the Earth...

KIMBALL: That's right. We found out, first of all, that we had to read up on this stuff and know it as well as the experts at that time. We'd retain it for a short while, then go on to another project. The general public didn't grasp the possibility of space travel. They had no conception of what was involved. That's why Eisenhower, when he happened to see our *Man In Space* program, was absorbed by it. He realized that he had generals in the Pentagon who didn't understand or accept these ideas. At first the military did not support America's program for space exploration. He flew them all in, and for two weeks he screened our program for his top generals. Walt was very proud when Eisenhower called him about the program, and was glad to accommodate him. The call came in to the Studio, and I guess at first the switchboard didn't believe it was the President of the United States. Walt told me that later the Russian government had also requested a copy of the *Man In Space* film, and he flatly turned them down. I asked him why, and he said, "Well, they borrowed a print of *Snow White* back in the late 30's and were going to keep it for just two weeks. Ten years later we got it back, all scratched up, with Russian titles on it."

That first *Man In Space* program was like a grammar school primer, where we tried to simplify everything we presented. In *Man In Space*, we began with early experiments with rockets. We explained Newton's theories of action/reaction, and Wernher von Braun demonstrated how a rocket in orbit would work. Heinz Haber told about the threat of cosmic rays. The narration was kept very simple, without any strange or technical terminology. When they would describe something overly technical, we would substitute a simpler phrase to make it more understandable. Although we had treated space flight and rocketry seriously, we developed a humorous character to demonstrate the Heinz Haber concepts of space medicine and the hazards of space.



Ward Kimball, Heinz Haber, Wernher von Braun and Willy Ley during the *Man In Space* production. Tiny members of the ground crew (center photo) prepare the rocket for its performance in *Man In Space*. Kimball discusses the storyboards with Walt Disney and Willy Ley, in May 1954 (below center).



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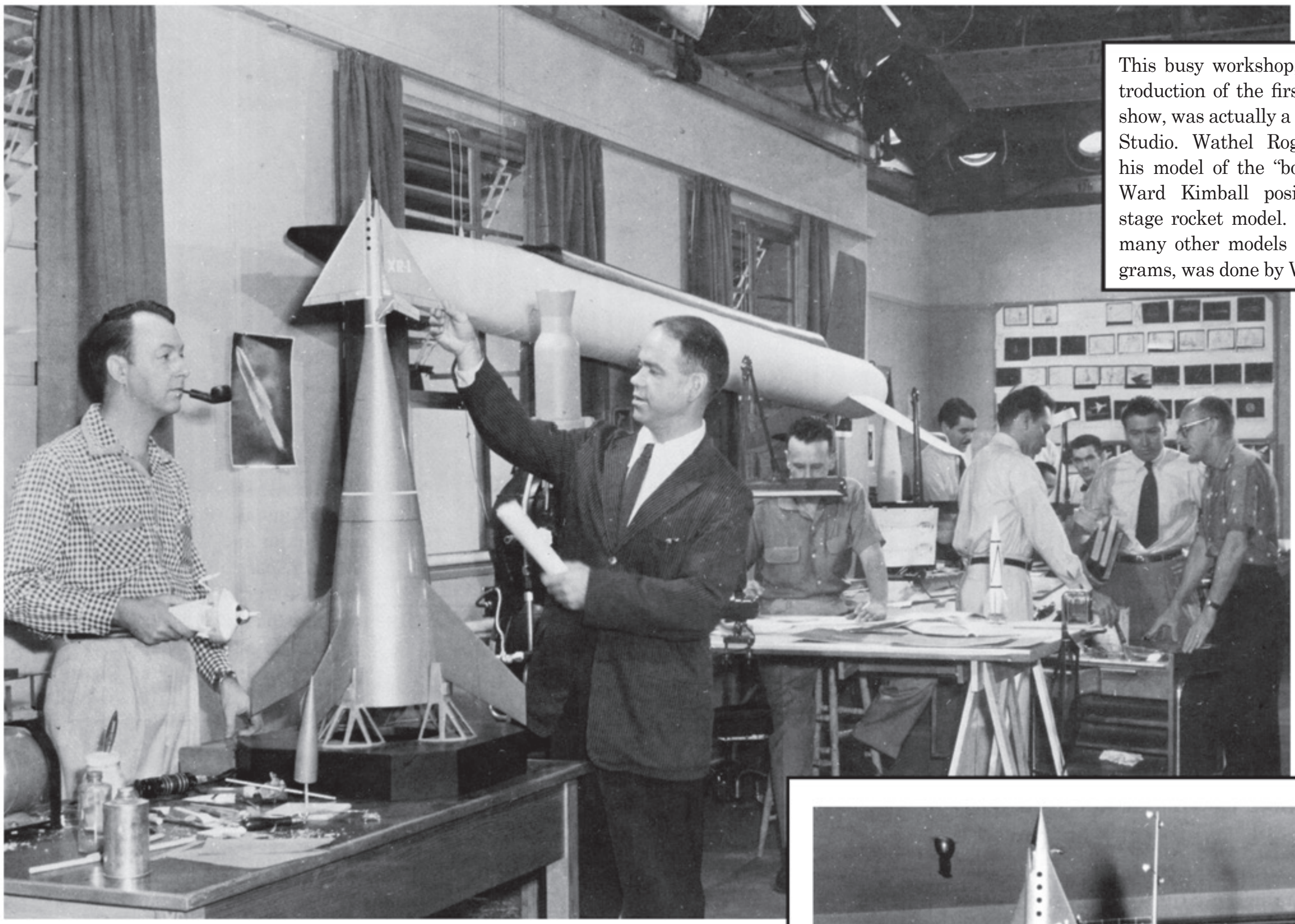
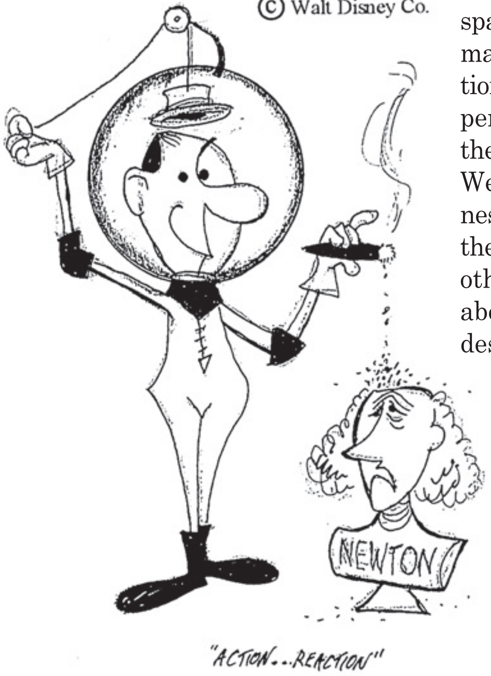
THE "E" TICKET: Was the design for the cartoon spaceman character yours, personally?

KIMBALL: Yes, that was mine. Heinz Haber named him "homo sapiens extra-terrestrialis" which was Latin for "spaceman." The animators, Julius Svendsen, Arthur Stevens, Charley Downs, and

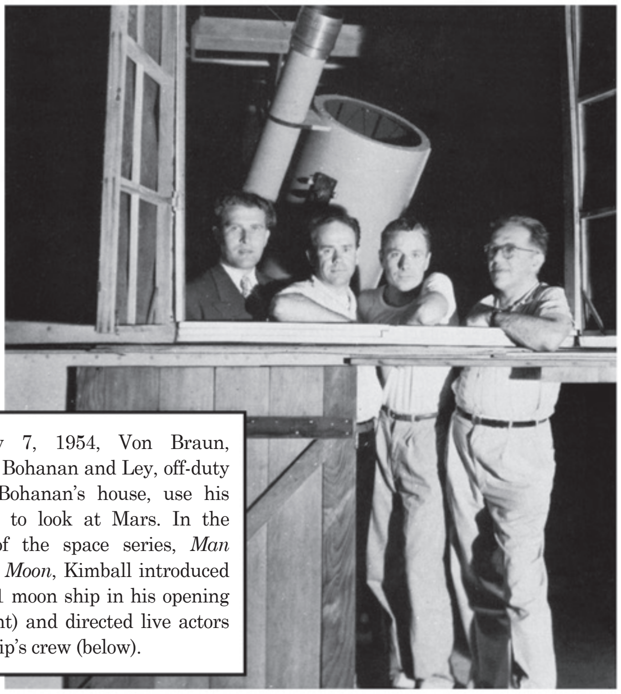


This busy workshop, seen in the introduction of the first *Man In Space* show, was actually a set at the Disney Studio. Wathel Rogers (left) holds his model of the "bottle suit," while Ward Kimball positions the four-stage rocket model. This rocket, like many other models seen in the programs, was done by Wathel Rogers.

the others, would think up gags in the process of doing the shows. We kept trying to find new ways to make the story better, and in this case, it was how an earthbound man would work out his problems in space. We came up with things like the little rocket pistol, which he would spray in different directions to move around in weightlessness.

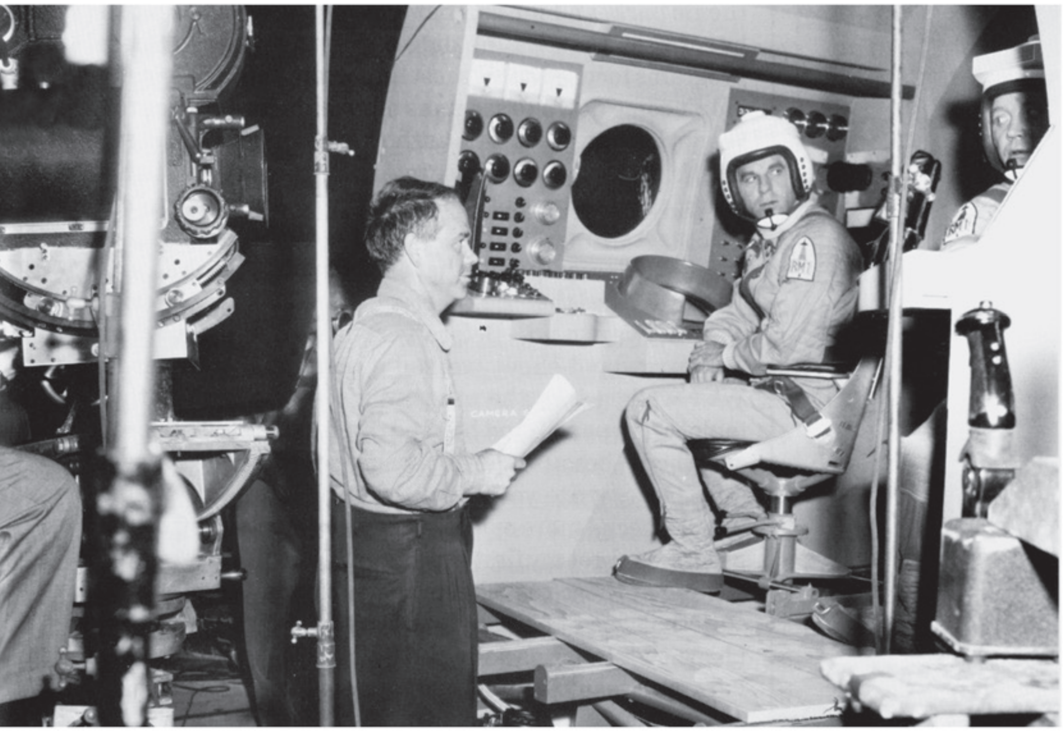


For *Man In Space* we used space medicine on our spaceman. We asked Haber questions like, "What would happen to you if you didn't have the protection of a space suit?" Weightlessness, space sickness, cosmic rays ... these were the things that Haber and the other guys were warning us about. As I listened to them describe the problems of living in space, I began to visualize the humorous situations we could illustrate with our cartoon spaceman. What happens to liquids in space? The frustration of mixing a Martini ... it would just float up and adhere to the surfaces and gradually expand until it coated all of the walls. And we reminded our spaceman of basic scientific fact by having a bust of Sir Isaac Newton float by saying, "Action ... reaction..." We were probably the first ones to ever explain concepts like that in simple form to a television audience.



On July 7, 1954, Von Braun, Kimball, Bohanan and Ley, off-duty at Rex Bohanan's house, use his telescope to look at Mars. In the second of the space series, *Man And The Moon*, Kimball introduced the RM-1 moon ship in his opening talk (right) and directed live actors as the ship's crew (below).

For the second show, *Man And The Moon*, there were so many myths and legends about the Moon ... when to plant crops and all kinds of other folklore ... that we did about fifteen minutes of that stuff. Walt had approved the approach of using humorous cartoons as introductions, and I found out that you can poke fun showing the past conceptions and early so-called scientific belief. We did a lot of "airbrush" animation at the end of the first show, but for the *Moon* picture, we used live action. We filmed live actors in space suits working with the realistic models. We shot them against a black background, with little holes pricked in it, for stars. The miniatures would be "doubled" in. We actually took the space wheel model and showed it flying and rotating around, as if it was seen in space by the actors in the cockpit of the moon rocket. We posed the live action with the model in the background. We didn't have a sodium screen back then, so we had to make masks, using a "traveling matte." If we had available all this new computer animation they have now, it would have been easy, and more realistic!



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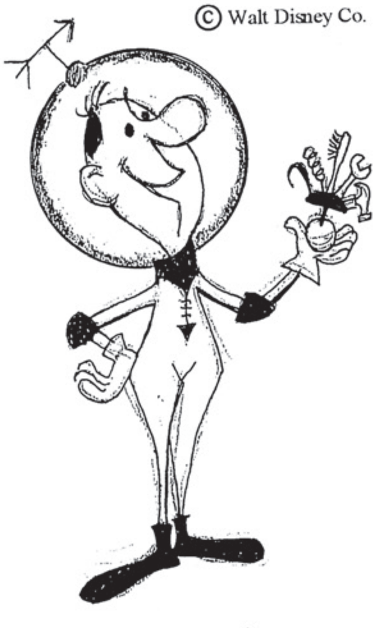
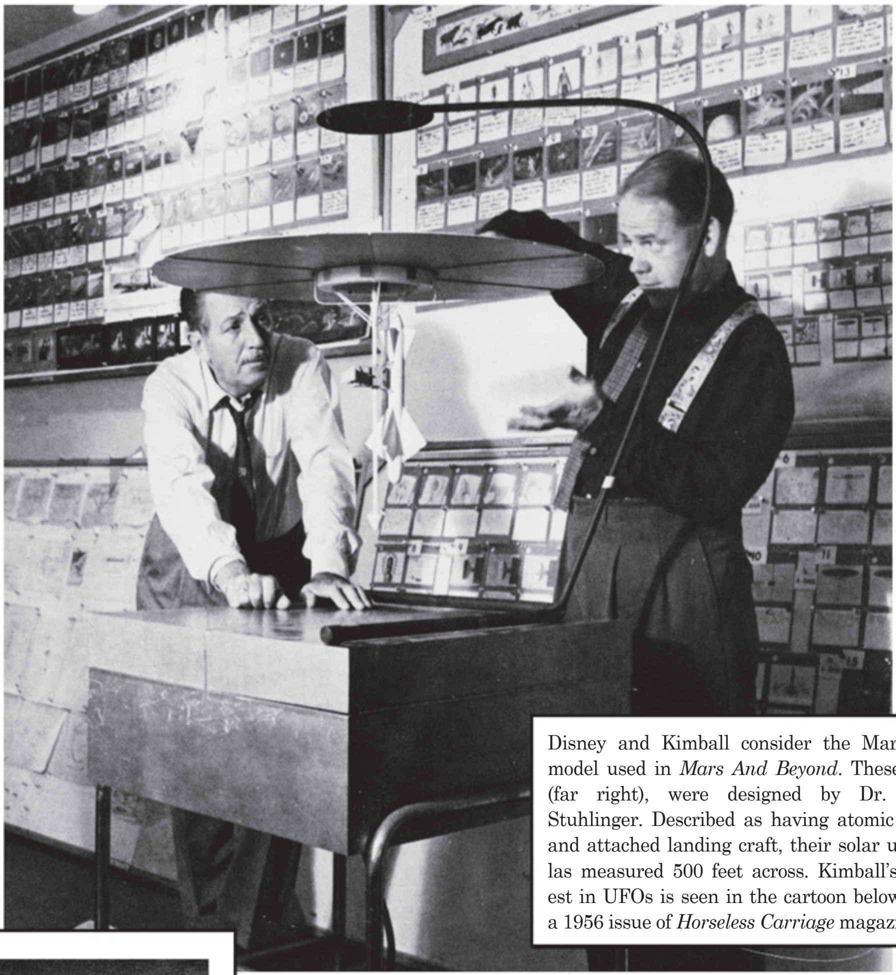


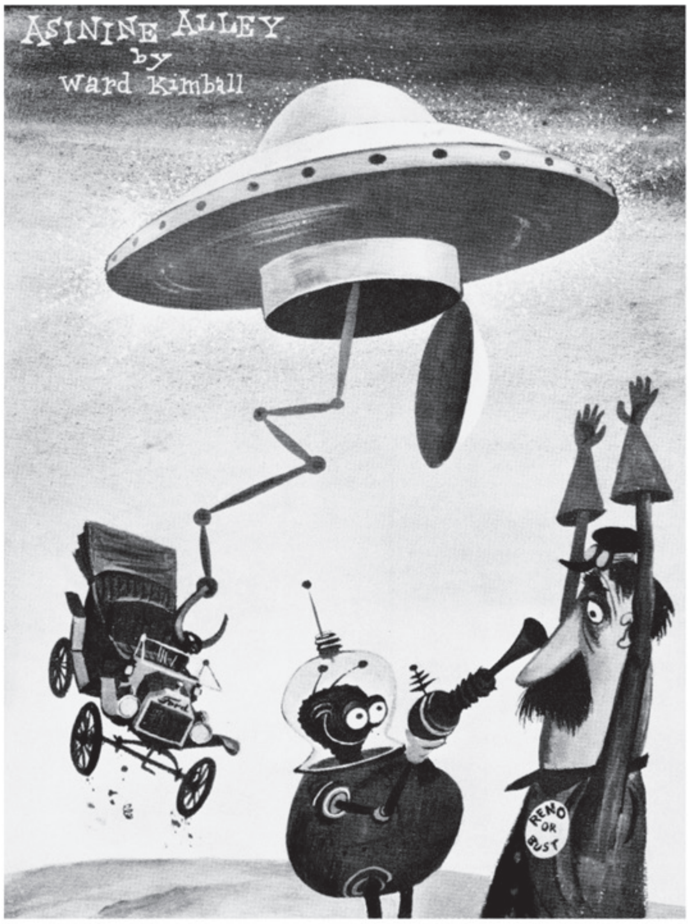
"SPACE TOOLS"

THE “E” TICKET: *Mars And Beyond* comes two years later, and it seems different. There are less experts, more speculation and a “kill or be killed” portrayal of life on Mars.

KIMBALL: Yes, but all life is like that. When we do a picture like *The Lion King*, it’s about survival and they actually joke about the food chain. *Mars And Beyond* really was more “far out” and speculative than the first two shows. We had astronomer E.C. Slipher, Ernst Stuhlinger (the atomic energy scientist who designed the umbrella-like Mars ships) and some other planetarium guys, who were the so-called experts on Mars. We went to the planetarium people because this was the only knowledge available. Back then, we all thought those little lines on Mars were canals, and it turned out they weren’t. The question was, “What will we find when we get to Mars?” That’s where we decided to use our imagination. And we had a perfect right to ... who’s to say it wasn’t going to be something like that?

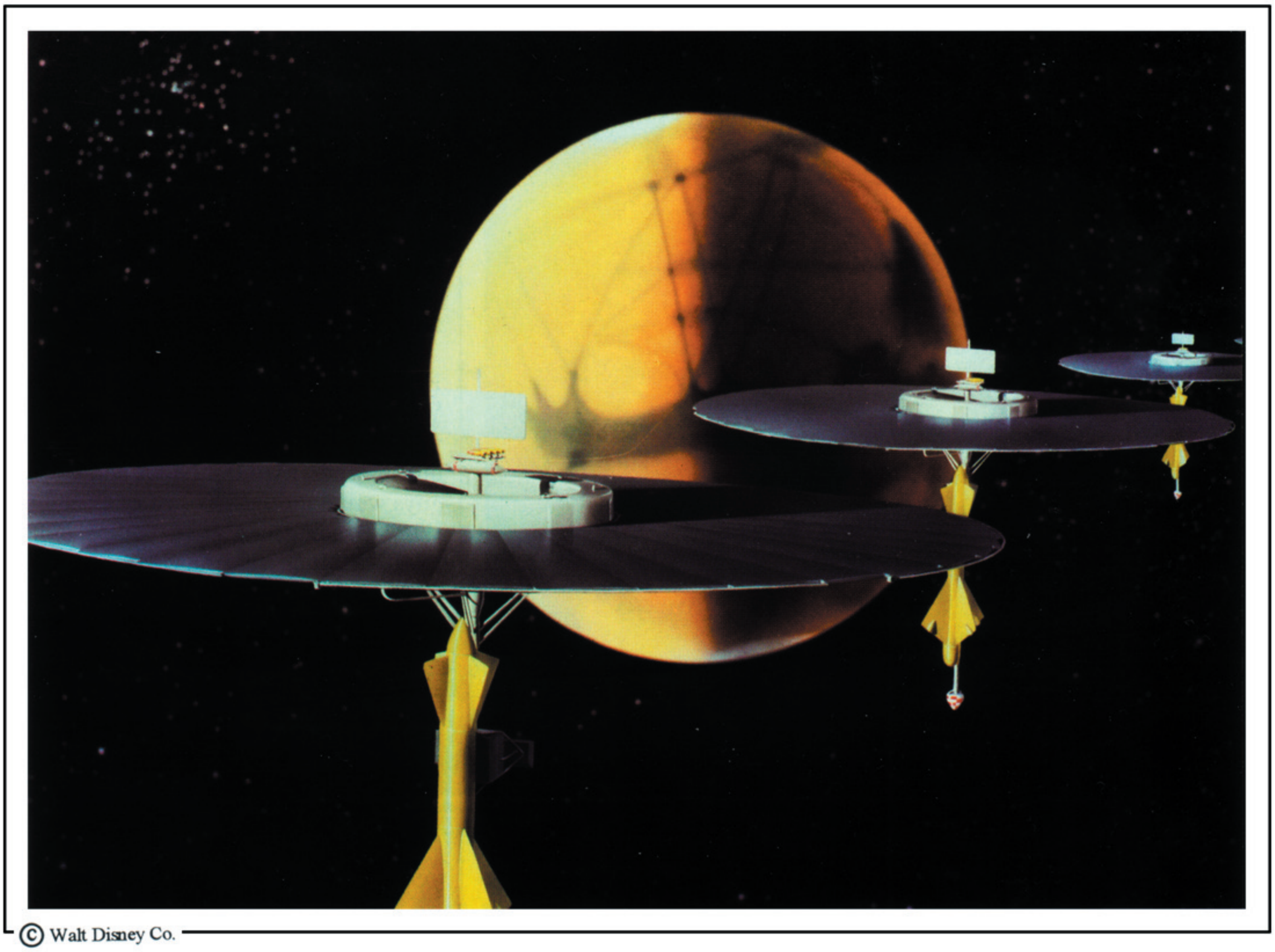


Disney and Kimball consider the Mars ship model used in *Mars And Beyond*. These ships (far right), were designed by Dr. Ernst Stuhlinger. Described as having atomic power and attached landing craft, their solar umbrellas measured 500 feet across. Kimball’s interest in UFOs is seen in the cartoon below, from a 1956 issue of *Horseless Carriage* magazine.



THE “E” TICKET: You’ve said you had more freedom than usual to produce these shows.

KIMBALL: Walt was very busy on the Disneyland theme park, and for us, that was probably a godsend. I hate to say that, but he didn’t have our *Man In Space* programs focused as his most important thing. He really didn’t come down to see us as often as before. It was the Disneyland Park ... that was the most important thing in his life. He was down there in Anaheim every day, in his boots, moving trees and telling everybody what to do, and where to do it. He’d had the *Collier’s Magazine* space articles for a while that I’d given him to look at, and he had decided that the approach in that magazine series was the way to go. Before we got started on the first Tomorrowland show, we had a meeting. Afterwards, Walt walked into the other room, came back with a tablet and a pencil, and handed them to me. That floored everybody, because they knew he was symbolically saying, “Here, write your own ticket!” So we had Walt’s “blank check,” more or less, and we eagerly took off on the programs. I got my first experiences as a producer. I was looking at those cost sheets every Monday, eliminating stuff that wasn’t necessary and making all the decisions. I learned a lot, especially since Walt was so busy at the Park and wasn’t looking over my shoulder. He never saw



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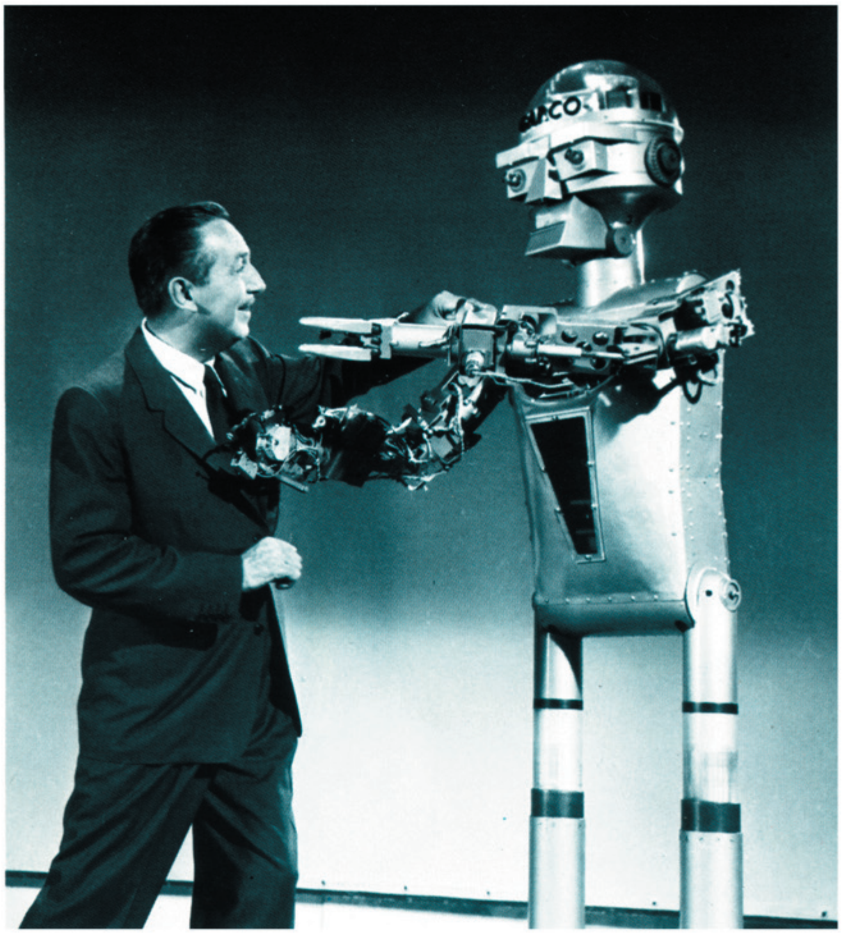
any of the *Mars* picture until we were together in the Studio projection room and we ran the work print for him. It was a very busy time, and maybe we got away with stuff he might never have let us try.

THE “E” TICKET: Do you have examples of what Walt may not have approved?

KIMBALL: Walt would have okayed, right off the bat, all the ideas with the space man and the spacesuit. This was because we were banking on Heinz Haber’s narration, and he was the authority. As he talked about the difficulties of doing things in the weightlessness of space, we showed it with animation. But with the second program, the *Moon* picture, we started going way back to old classics written by famous authors and finding moon material in these sources. The beginning section of *Mars And Beyond* had quotations from literature about the planet, and then an animated segment where we showed all these weird forms of possible Martian life. Walt sat there next to me with his mouth wide open, in the back row of the projection room, as people were laughing. This was during the sandstorm part, where a silicon creature is feeding on sand, and other plants are protecting their faces with their leaves. Walt turned to me and asked, “How do you guys think up all that stuff, anyway?” And this was coming from Walt Disney! I couldn’t believe it!

THE “E” TICKET: Walt’s introduction to the third show is really something, when he shares the screen with that huge robot.

KIMBALL: GARCO! That was a nice decision that we made, showing the earthman’s humor about space and the future ... and the concept of using robots up there. We had heard about that robot when we were working



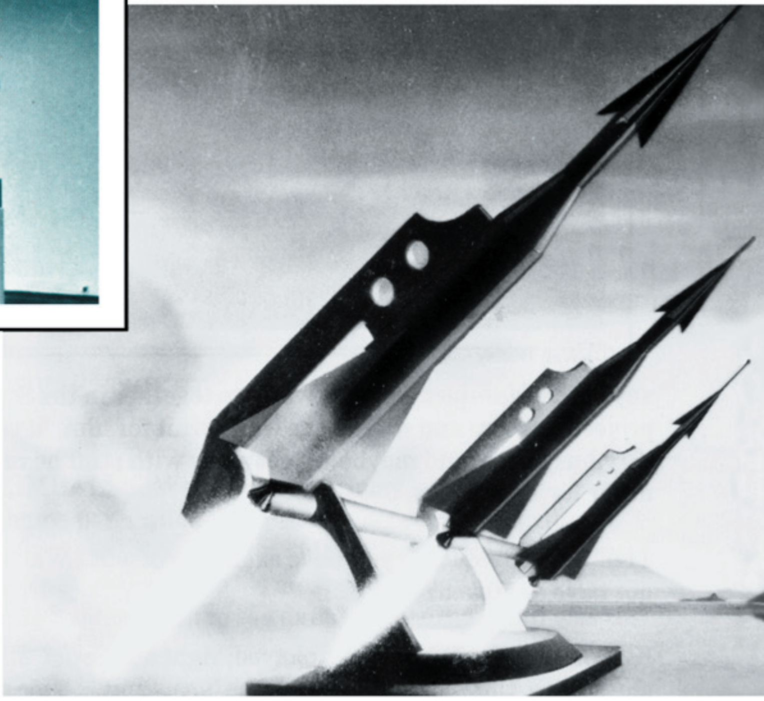
on the show. Right away I thought, "What a keen way to introduce Walt," and so we used GARCO. First we recorded the robot's comments in that deep voice, and then we opened and closed its mouth to synch with the recording. We knew that it would be amusing, and different, from the other openings Walt had done for the T.V. programs.

THE "E" TICKET: How involved were you in the animation?

KIMBALL: Well, I had only just stopped animating in 1953, when we won the Academy Award for *Toot, Whistle, Plunk and Boom*. That's when Walt moved me into television. T.V. was fun, because we had the challenge of working with smaller budgets and you had to make quick decisions. You could see the results sooner. We had more say over what material was used and we did a lot of experimenting with techniques like limited animation. I had to improvise for the lack of help at that time. I couldn't get top experienced feature film animators because the Disneyland television shows were lower on the priority list. That's why I decided to use guys in my unit from the in-between department. I would go down there after hours to look at what the in-betweeners and assistant guys were drawing and pinning up. That's how I found them. I had my assistants, Sven (Julius Svendsen) and Art Stevens, and they were the first to come aboard. The rest were what you might call "junior animators," but some, like John Dunn, had a lot of imagination. He made very funny drawings. I trained these young and energetic artists, and showed some of them how to do basic animation. That was in 1953, and by 1954 we were already working on the space shows.

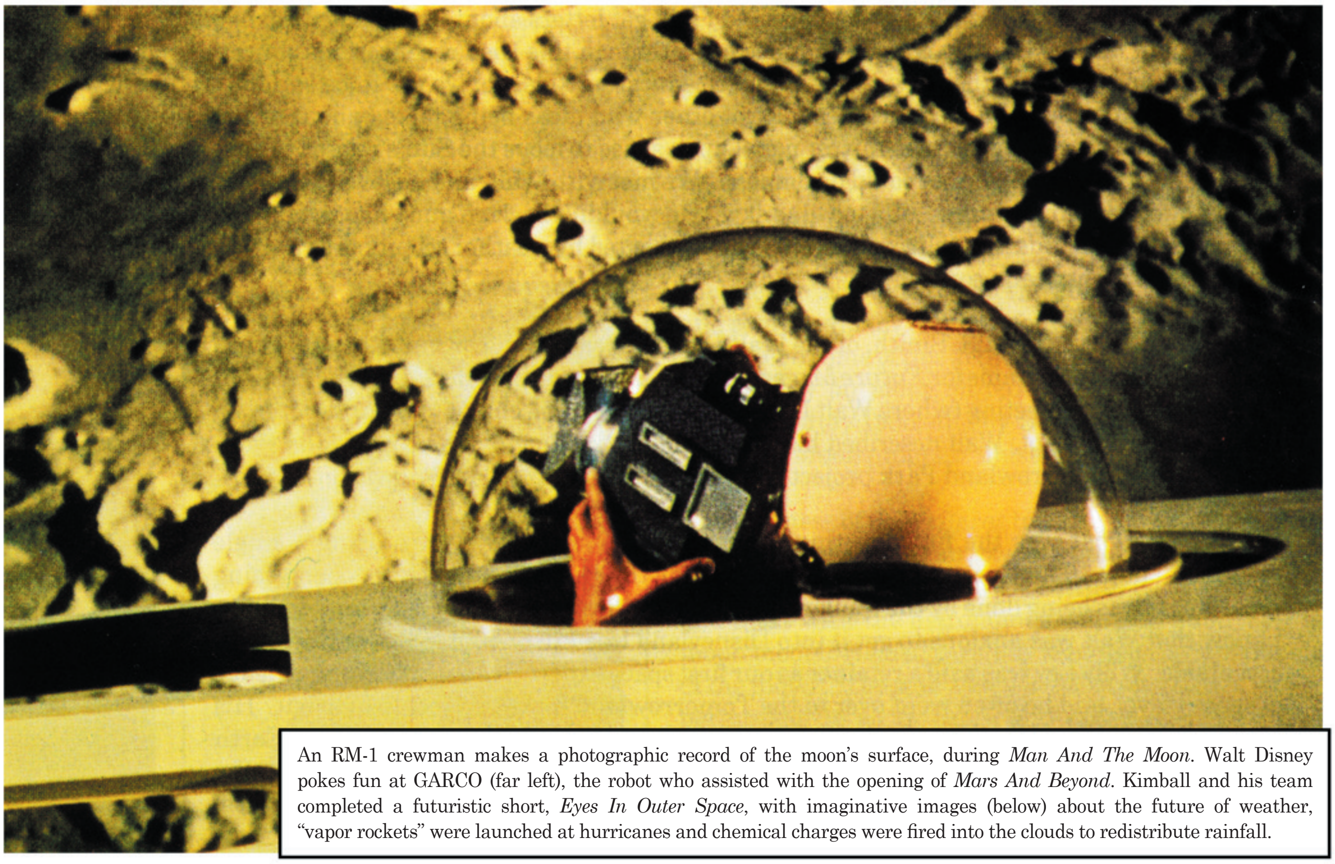
THE "E" TICKET: The programs end with "scientific" animation in a very realistic and finished style, very different than the humorous animation ... did your unit do both?

KIMBALL: Yes, our group did both styles. We had several good airbrush guys in the unit. Ken O'Connor did the wonderful layout sketches, then Bill Layne and the other guys would do the finished color painting. We were going for a super-realism. A lot of effective things were done with sliding cels, moving the images across the background. One trick, for instance, would show a giant rocket moving slowly into position on the launching pad. We would pull the camera toward it or back from it as it moved. There were a lot of other examples of mechanical animation used. We figured out the camera moves that would simulate realism.



THE "E" TICKET: In part of the *Mars And Beyond* narration, you describe with *cinema verite* the evolution of life on Earth. Wasn't that controversial in the mid-fifties?

KIMBALL: No, because we had already suggested that completely and clearly in *Fantasia*. The only thing we



An RM-1 crewman makes a photographic record of the moon's surface, during *Man And The Moon*. Walt Disney pokes fun at GARCO (far left), the robot who assisted with the opening of *Mars And Beyond*. Kimball and his team completed a futuristic short, *Eyes In Outer Space*, with imaginative images (below) about the future of weather, "vapor rockets" were launched at hurricanes and chemical charges were fired into the clouds to redistribute rainfall.

didn't have in *Fantasia* was a narrator. In *Mars And Beyond*, we show man evolving up from a single cell, developing in the middle of this "primordial soup." We did it fast, with quick cuts, so that all of a sudden, there man stands before you. Then we establish that our human species dominates the world, but he has his shortcomings. He can't take temperatures that you'd find on Venus, and he'd freeze to death on Mars. His existence depends on this very narrow range of temperature, and that was an important point. We had to show this thin band of temperature that man can tolerate, in order to tell our story. This segment was questioned by the head of the Studio Educational Film department who would later send our films to the public schools. When he saw that part on our storyboards, he got worried and said we were promoting evolution. He informed me that there were other ideas on that topic, and he asked, "Why do you have to have that in there?" And I answered, "Why did we have to put it in *Fantasia*?" I explained that we had to establish why man was unique, existing only in these close temperature ranges, in order to set up what was to follow.

I had to fight to keep in quite a few ideas in another short Tomorrowland film we did at the time. It was all about weather, and was called *Eyes In Outer Space* (later *Spy In The Sky*). We were explaining how weather comes down to earth in different forms, and I used a little drip character we called "water" or "rain." We used a jazzy little soundtrack that played along with him. When this drip came down to Earth he'd get squashed when a tire ran over him. Next, he'd come down as hail, snow and rain, all with dire results. We showed all the life forms affected by this drop of water, until a full cycle took place which we called weather.

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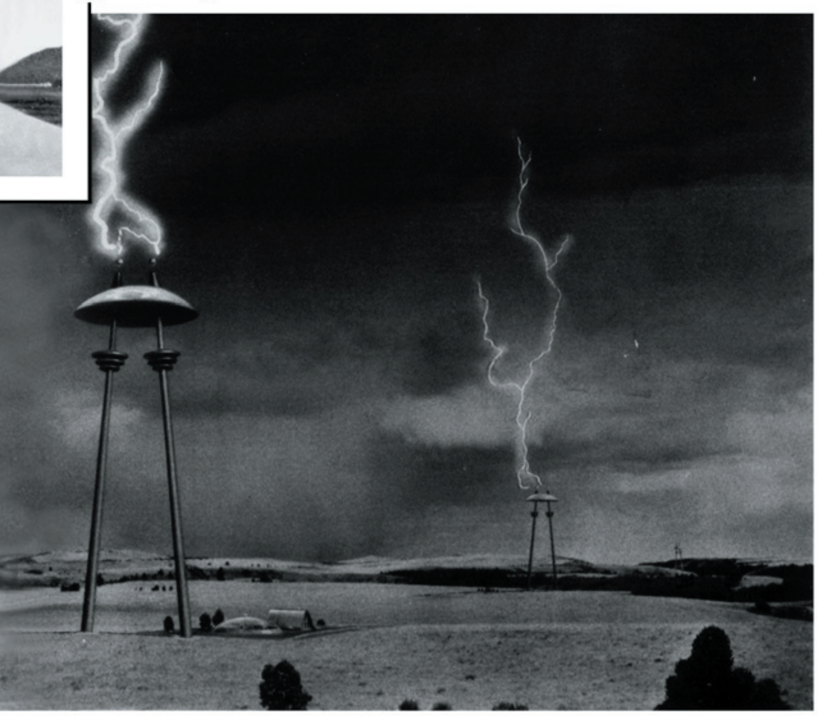
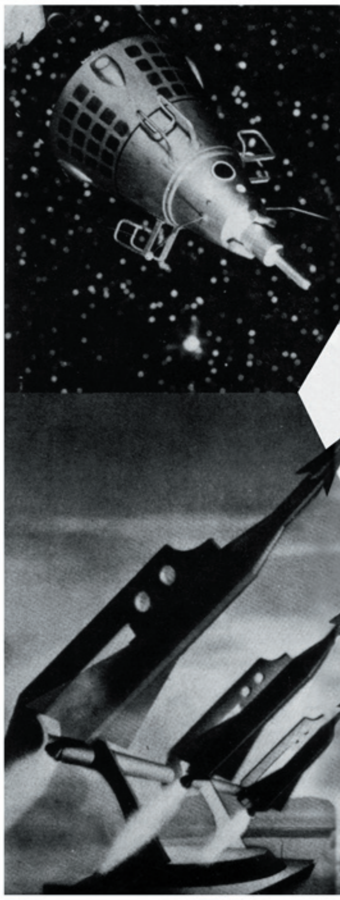
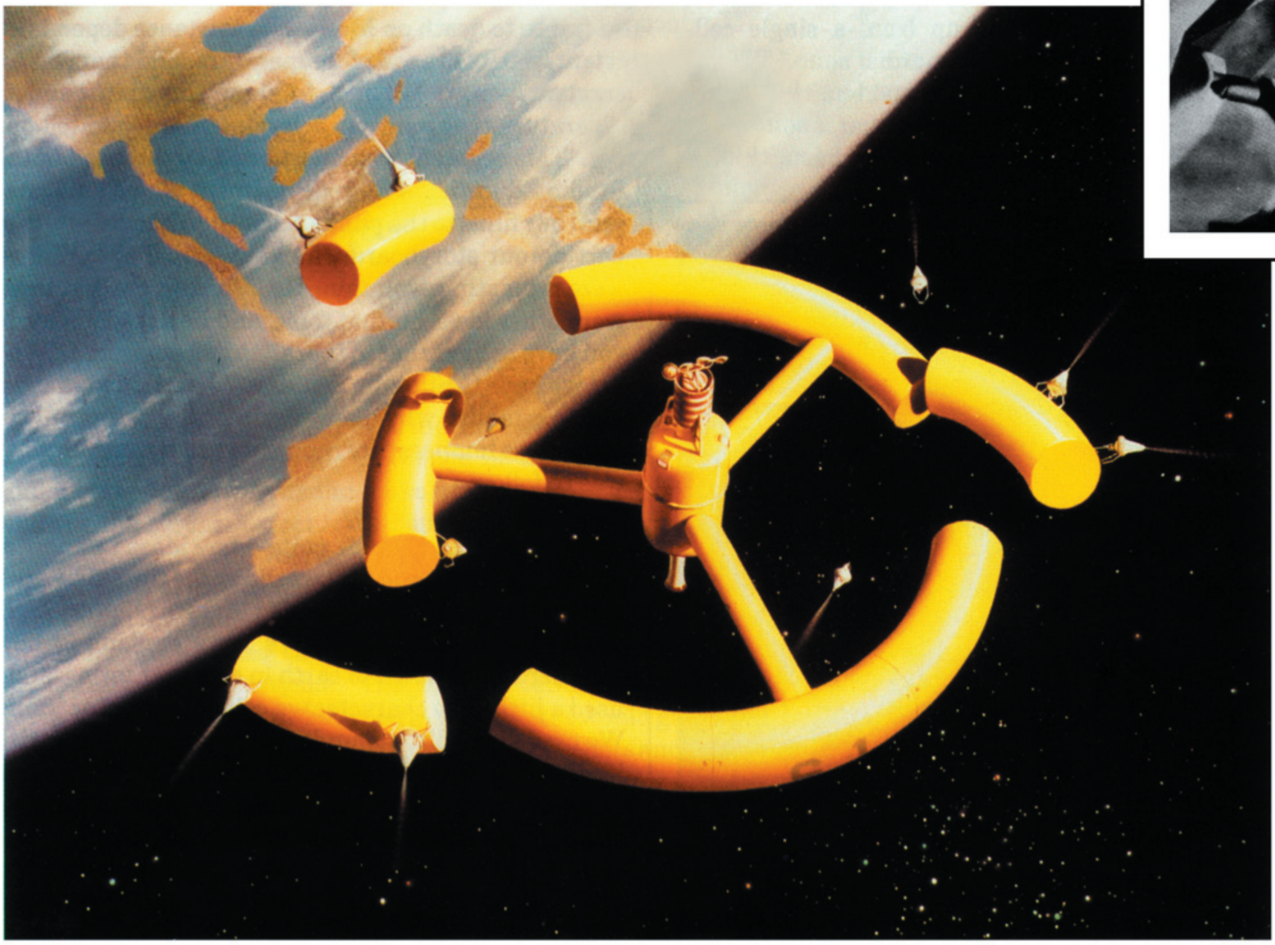


This film continues to be shown in schools, and I still get letters about it praising its explanation of weather. But I had to fight to keep the drip character in because others in this Disney censorious educational department said it was too “flippant.” Their belief was that if you’re educating kids, you’ve got to be serious, and I knew that was an outright myth. That film also includes a lot of other wild ideas being talked about at that time. One was about launching and assembling a huge mirror panel up in space to focus the Sun’s rays at the eye of a hurricane, thereby burning out the storm before it could do damage. We met with Walt, and he loved this weather picture, but he said, “I don’t like that mirror thing ... it’s too blue sky!” He wouldn’t back off and I had to take that part out. Incidentally, just for the record, this Sun/mirror concept is now accepted by weather scientists as a viable tool for future hurricane control.

THE “E” TICKET: David R. Smith, of the Walt Disney Archives, did an extensive article on the *Man In Space* programs for *Future Magazine* (May, 1978). He included direct quotes from a transcript of that meeting (where Walt Disney gave you a “blank check” for your programs). In the same transcript, Walt described his “moon ride attraction” for the Disneyland Park. How did this Tomorrowland Park project relate to your Tomorrowland television work?

KIMBALL: That was the first meeting, when we still thought we were doing a single television show. The **Rocket To The Moon** ride for the Disneyland Park was something separate. It was being done by the Imagineers, and was subsidized by Trans World Airlines. I know that Walt was anxious to get it into Disneyland in a hurry, and to do whatever was acceptable. Willy Ley was paid a retainer as our first space expert. He had a basic knowledge of space travel, and he often went over to the Tomorrowland rocket project to help out. His input helped shape what the audience was shown during the ride, like the images of the Earth and moon growing larger in the viewscreens. John Hench was involved, and he painted the backgrounds that were seen as the ship went up and away from the Earth. Current rides, like **Star Tours**, are being done so much better now, but the **Rocket To The Moon** ride was a direct ancestor of the simulator rides.





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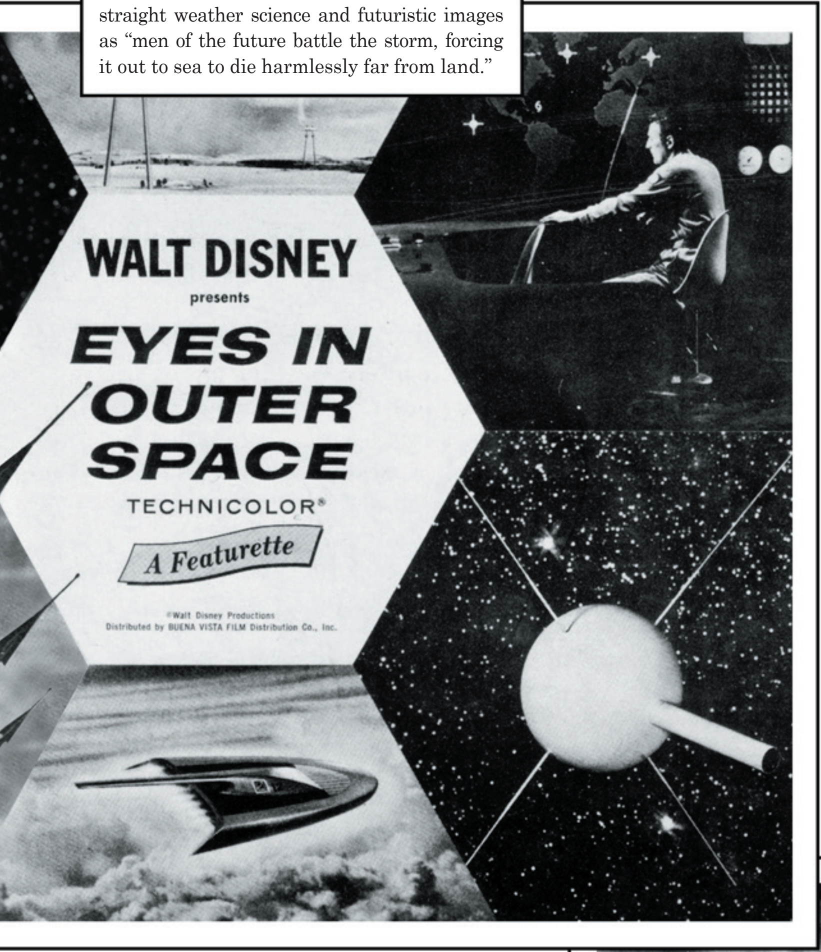
THE "E" TICKET: Walt does introduce the second program, *Man And The Moon*, with photos of the **Rocket To The Moon** attraction at the Park. And there are duplications, like the firing of flares at the dark side of the moon.

Although not part of the *Man In Space* series, *Eyes In Outer Space* was a "science factual" short released in 1959. It was an odd mixture of straight weather science and futuristic images as "men of the future battle the storm, forcing it out to sea to die harmlessly far from land."



KIMBALL: I'm not sure what material from our programs they may have later used for the ride, but some of our team did meet with them. Walt would have said, "Go down there and see what they're doing on the T.V. *Moon* picture ... we're going to the moon with this rocket ride and they've got a space wheel and a lot of other stuff there." I'm sure that would have been Walt's attitude at the time, and those projects didn't move an inch without his okay. I think a lot of the animated footage of the take-off may be the same as ours in the *Moon* picture. John Hench designed the visuals for the ride, and Willy Ley helped them define some of the concepts. He's the one who suggested that the rocket "flip over" with the Earth and the moon trading places on the fore and aft viewscreens. The idea was that passengers sat in this circular theatre, and with aerials and dissolves, they would watch the Earth recede and they'd end up in space. The **TWA Rocket** ride got placed on the front burner because Tomorrowland at the Park didn't have much to show. Disneyland's Tomorrowland got a late start. The **Rocket** ride had a fast completion schedule to join the **20,000 Leagues** exhibit, and some company displays for opening day. By April of 1955 when some of this artwork was done, we would have been pretty far along on our productions. Disneyland opened in July 1955, and by December we had our *Man And The Moon* program finished.

The business of firing flares towards the dark side of the moon was probably borrowed from our stuff, in 1955. What we did was go over to the Griffith Park Observatory and meet with the astronomer who had built their big moon model. He had carefully sculpted the familiar side of the moon ... the side which is seen from Earth. We got permission to go in there and make accurate rubber impressions from that model and then we were able to build our own moon model at the Studio. We designed ours so that it went clear around to the other side. We were advised that the other side of the moon was probably much like our side, so we improvised. In *Man And The Moon*, we had this sequence when the moon rocket went around the moon, lost contact with the Earth, then had to reestablish radio contact. During its pass through the darkness, the ship fired flares down toward the surface of the moon. I argued that we needed some ruins or something down there ... some sort of lost civilization,

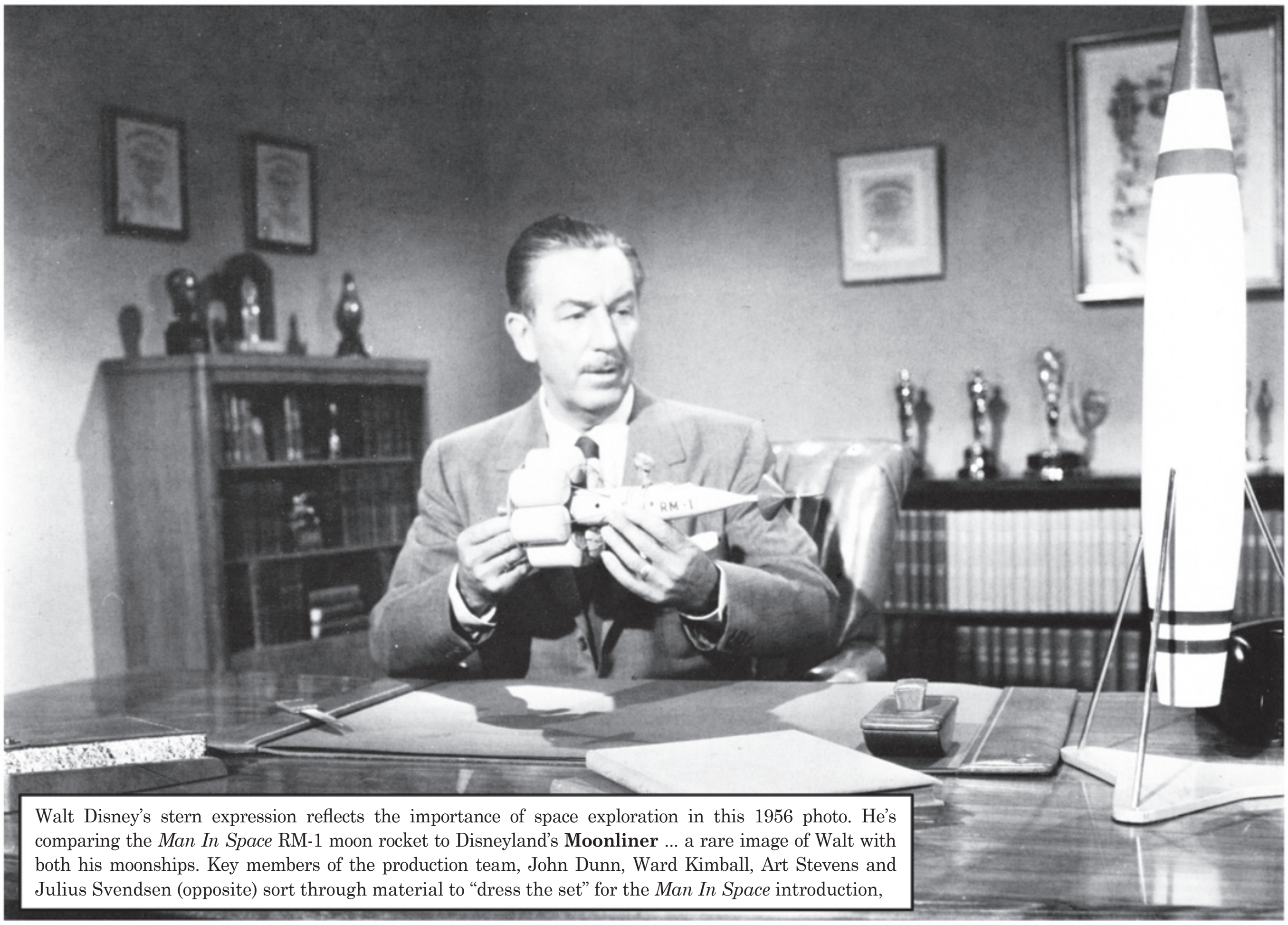
seen by the crew very quickly in the light of the flares. We had designed these big sections of the moon so that when built, we were able to pan with the camera very closely, and we did put some ancient ruins in there. Wernher von Braun was against doing this, but I said, "We can't just go around the moon. We've got to have a little mystery ... at least some evidence that might look like an ancient civilization that has crumbled away. So I exercised my prerogative as the Director, and it's in there. If that's also in the **TWA Rocket To The Moon** ride, they may have gotten it from our shows. I only saw that attraction once, back when it opened. Later, after the successful voyage of NASA's Apollo VIII mission, Werner called me from Huntsville and, in an excited voice said, "Well Ward, it looks like they're following our script." Of course, the Apollo VIII mission proved I was wrong. Indeed, Von Braun was right ... the other side of the moon looks much like the side we see.

THE "E" TICKET: Your *Man In Space* programs all make use of humor, while the Park ride has none.

KIMBALL: That's right. Any audience starts out uninformed, and they don't at first know what you're talking about. The people who went into that Tomorrowland **Rocket** ride didn't know much about space travel, either. On our T.V. space show I found that humor gets the viewer's attention, and helps make a difficult point. A lot of the subtle "legends of the moon" comedy in the second show, *Man And The Moon*, is an example of this. That historical material was in the style of English documentaries, where they underplay their narrations and descriptions and let what's being shown on the screen get the laugh. By our third program, about Mars, the humor had become pretty sophisticated. That sequence of the secretary who gets abducted by the Martian monster works pretty well. At that time, we were doing things nobody else was doing. I knew that I had some insulation to experiment because Walt was tied up overseeing other projects.

THE "E" TICKET: Did you have prior experience in front of the camera, before you hosted the *Man In Space* productions?

KIMBALL: Sure. A lot of us were filmed working on the Mad Tea Party sequence for *Alice In Wonderland*, to promote the film. I was shown drawing the Mad Hatter character, at one point. I had already done some rather awful acting in *The Reluctant Dragon*, and the trip through the Studio with Robert Benchley. In that footage, while I was at my desk drawing, I got to make faces. But to introduce *Man In Space*, I had to play it pretty straight.



Walt Disney's stern expression reflects the importance of space exploration in this 1956 photo. He's comparing the *Man In Space* RM-1 moon rocket to Disneyland's **Moonliner** ... a rare image of Walt with both his moonships. Key members of the production team, John Dunn, Ward Kimball, Art Stevens and Julius Svendsen (opposite) sort through material to "dress the set" for the *Man In Space* introduction,

THE “E” TICKET: Walt once said that you were a genius, and we wanted to ask you how that happened. Was it because you were involved in so many different pursuits?

KIMBALL: Well, a lot of that was just coincidence and luck. It’s true that Walt was curious when he first heard about my various hobbies and activities. I mean he probably thought it was a little strange. Walt had me pegged as being good with music and rhythmical animation. As far back as *Woodland Cafe*, I was animating stuff like Cab Calloway style bugs, playing instruments. We got Walt interested in the miniature inch-and-a-half scale steam locomotives, back in 1938. Later, I went with him to the Railroad Fair in Chicago. Nobody else could understand why I would want to own this full-size steam locomotive and later, the railroad cars. When visitors came here and walked along the track, they were amazed and thought I was crazy. In the television program, *Disney Family Album*, it was stated: “Walt called Ward Kimball a genius, and he never said that about anyone else.” That was the final nail in my coffin! He never complimented you in person, you always heard his praise second hand. Walt made that compliment to Pete Martin, in the interview called *“My Dad Walt Disney,”* done with Diane Disney for the *Saturday Evening Post*. Diane Disney said later, “I had nothing to do with that ... it was all between Walt and Pete Martin.”

THE “E” TICKET: With all these interests in nostalgia and history, how did you become Walt’s “modern thinker” for the Tomorrowland programs?

KIMBALL: For one thing, right after the War, I took up flying. I did a lot of small craft flying until the smog moved in and they subdivided all of the landing fields around here. As it became a safety problem, I kind of gave it up. The other thing was my interest at the time in the UFO phenomenon. When Walt came to me asking what we should do with the Tomorrowland programs, he said, “You’re interested in UFOs and all that stuff...” And I was. I had stacks of books and magazines all about UFO sightings and I knew someday I would do something on the subject. Even while I was doing the first three T.V. space shows, this was my idea for the fourth Tomorrowland program ... that’s why you see the animated UFOs taking off at the end of *Mars And Beyond*. The question we were asking was, “What will the explorers of tomorrow find when they go to Mars and beyond?” I had talked to Walt about this fourth show, and what I was thinking about, and he said, “Great, but we’ve got to get convincing footage!” We researched some of the incidents where people had taken actual films of flying saucers, and the trail led us to the Air Force establishment. We were told they had thousands of feet of so called “alien objects” footage, but that the material was classified. We ran into a brick wall, dressed in khaki uniforms. I went to Walt with the fact that we couldn’t get “smoking gun” footage of UFOs, and we both agreed, that was the end of it.

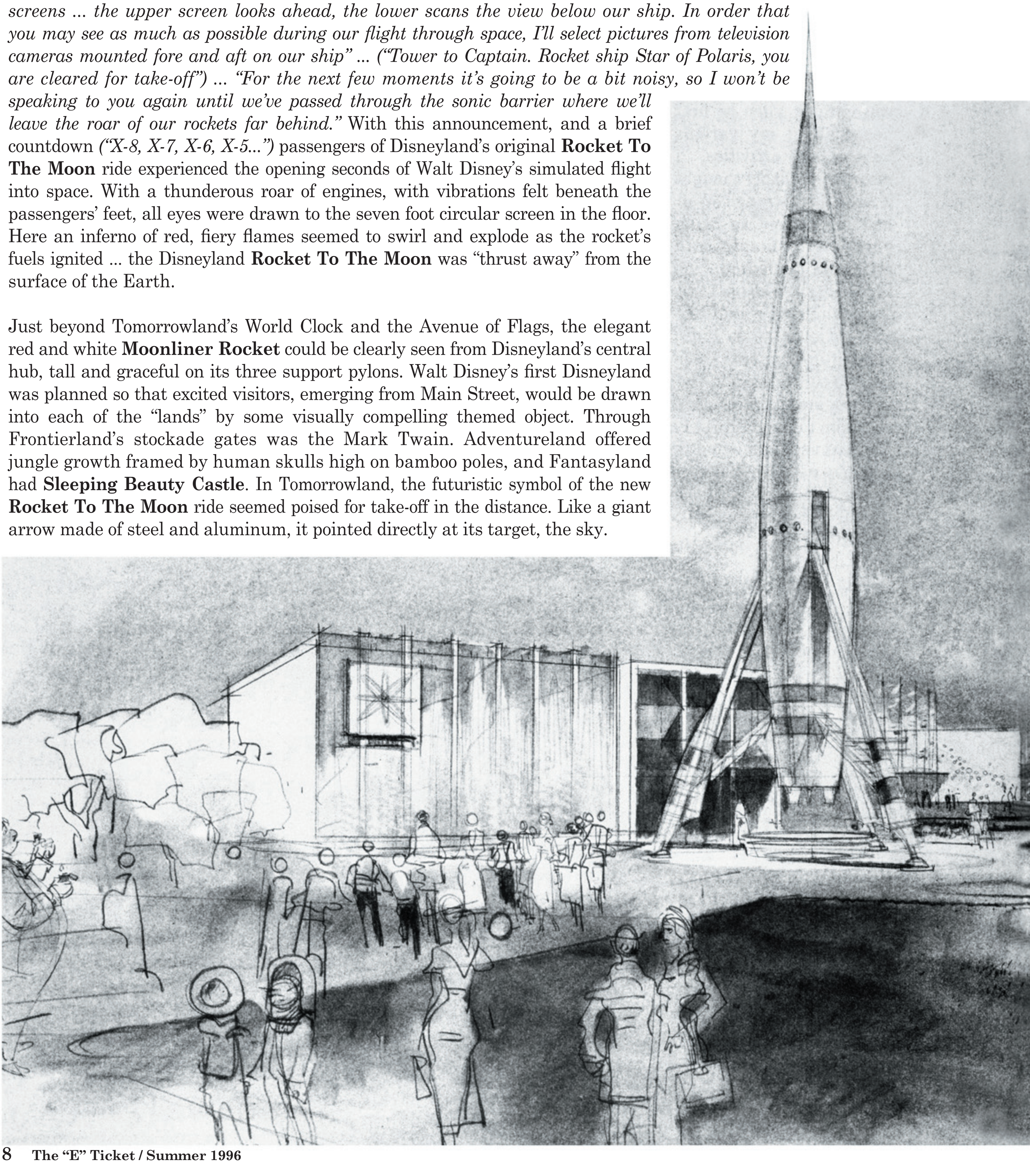
As for my interest in the past ... I don’t believe you can enjoy or predict the future without knowing what the past looked like. And we had to have these programs for Tomorrowland. They were fun to do! I wouldn’t have done these things if they hadn’t been exciting. I suggested these ideas to Walt, and I was very enthused about them because they were ideas and concepts that would work. They weren’t science fiction. We made that clear by calling them “science factual,” because we were dealing with knowledge. I look back on those programs as a highlight of my career with Disney. It was a high point for me, because I felt I was participating and being part of the future. I was rubbing elbows with the people who were going to take us to the moon, and to Mars, and beyond to other planets. *This* was an elixir that one couldn’t deny.

Ward Kimball

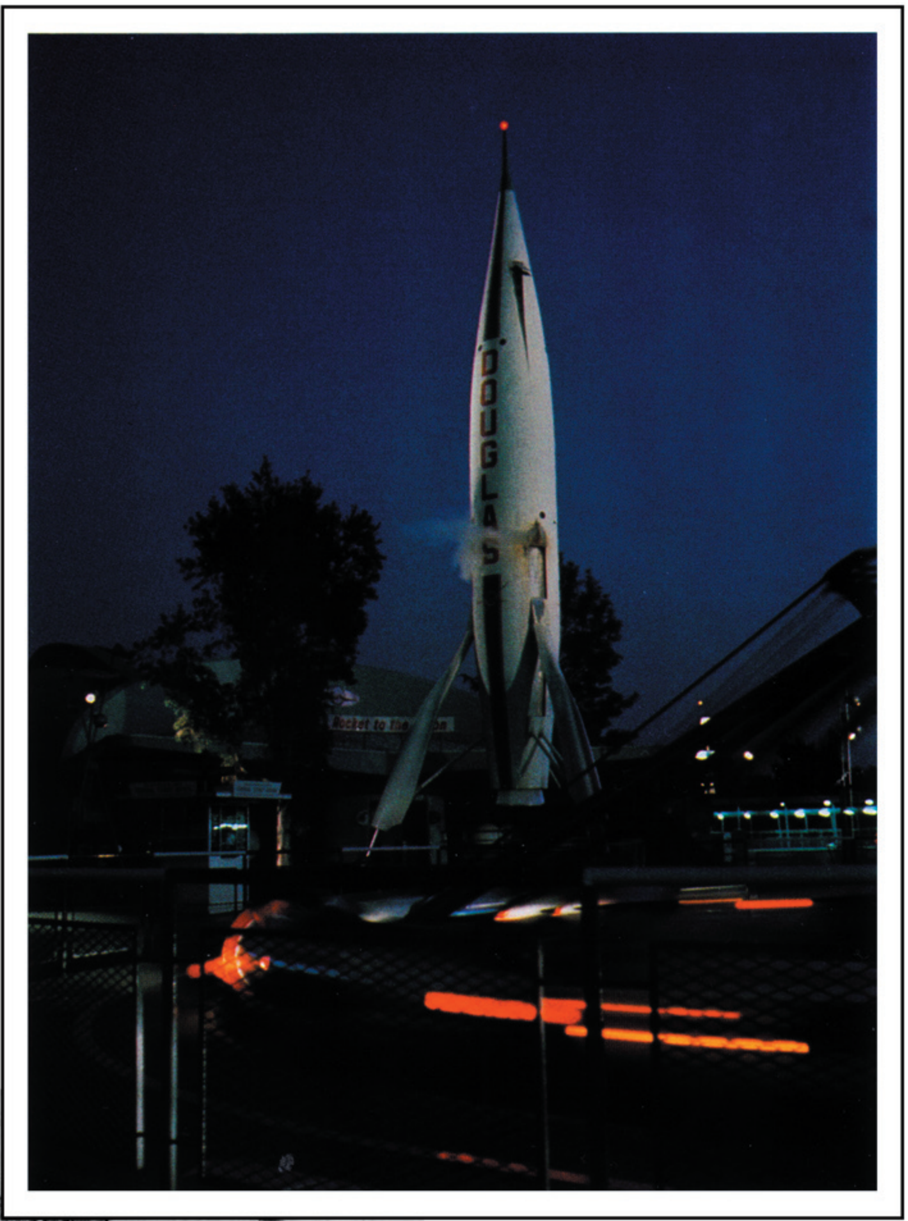
Disneyland's
ROCKET TO THE MOON

"Welcome aboard, friends. This is Captain Collins speaking. Please observe the two television screens ... the upper screen looks ahead, the lower scans the view below our ship. In order that you may see as much as possible during our flight through space, I'll select pictures from television cameras mounted fore and aft on our ship" ... ("Tower to Captain. Rocket ship Star of Polaris, you are cleared for take-off") ... "For the next few moments it's going to be a bit noisy, so I won't be speaking to you again until we've passed through the sonic barrier where we'll leave the roar of our rockets far behind." With this announcement, and a brief countdown *("X-8, X-7, X-6, X-5...")* passengers of Disneyland's original **Rocket To The Moon** ride experienced the opening seconds of Walt Disney's simulated flight into space. With a thunderous roar of engines, with vibrations felt beneath the passengers' feet, all eyes were drawn to the seven foot circular screen in the floor. Here an inferno of red, fiery flames seemed to swirl and explode as the rocket's fuels ignited ... the Disneyland **Rocket To The Moon** was "thrust away" from the surface of the Earth.

Just beyond Tomorrowland's World Clock and the Avenue of Flags, the elegant red and white **Moonliner Rocket** could be clearly seen from Disneyland's central hub, tall and graceful on its three support pylons. Walt Disney's first Disneyland was planned so that excited visitors, emerging from Main Street, would be drawn into each of the "lands" by some visually compelling themed object. Through Frontierland's stockade gates was the Mark Twain. Adventureland offered jungle growth framed by human skulls high on bamboo poles, and Fantasyland had **Sleeping Beauty Castle**. In Tomorrowland, the futuristic symbol of the new **Rocket To The Moon** ride seemed poised for take-off in the distance. Like a giant arrow made of steel and aluminum, it pointed directly at its target, the sky.



The Disneyland Trans World Airlines **Rocket To The Moon** ride was located at the far end of Tomorrowland's 1955 corridor of attractions. To reach the rocket ride, Park guests would pass the **Circarama Theater** on the left, and the **20,000 Leagues Under The Sea** exhibit on the right. Scientific displays by corporate sponsors were also on either side, including Richfield's **World Beneath Us,** Crane Company's **Fixtures of the Future**, Kaiser Aluminum, and Monsanto's **House of Chemistry**. Then, a short walk in the open sunshine past the Flight Circle (and Hobbyland) brought people to the **Moon** ride's ticket booth and entrance. The ride structure itself had a curved and arching facade (the pre-show waiting area), with a matched pair of round buildings (the actual amphitheaters) to the rear. On the roofs of these two structures were fin-like cement ridges which curved up and out to their highest point, giving each dome the appearance of an observatory. Positioned over its "blast hole," the gleaming white spacecraft stood close to the space port entrance and towered over people as they entered. Signs at the rocket's concrete base, and a series of graphics framed along the open front of the building, explained and displayed the wonders to be experienced by Disneyland space travelers. Park visitors entered the "ultra-modern" space port through a turnstile where signs, recorded narration and uniformed hostesses affirmed that this was TWA service as it would be in the year 1986. This space terminal concept was an effective first step in making the futuristic theme of the attraction credible. Once inside the spaceport's open air Briefing Room, people collected along chrome pipe railings and curved benches, divided within two staging areas. Here they waited for the next available flight ... and watched a "briefing session" on a large hooded screen above the left and right departure doors.



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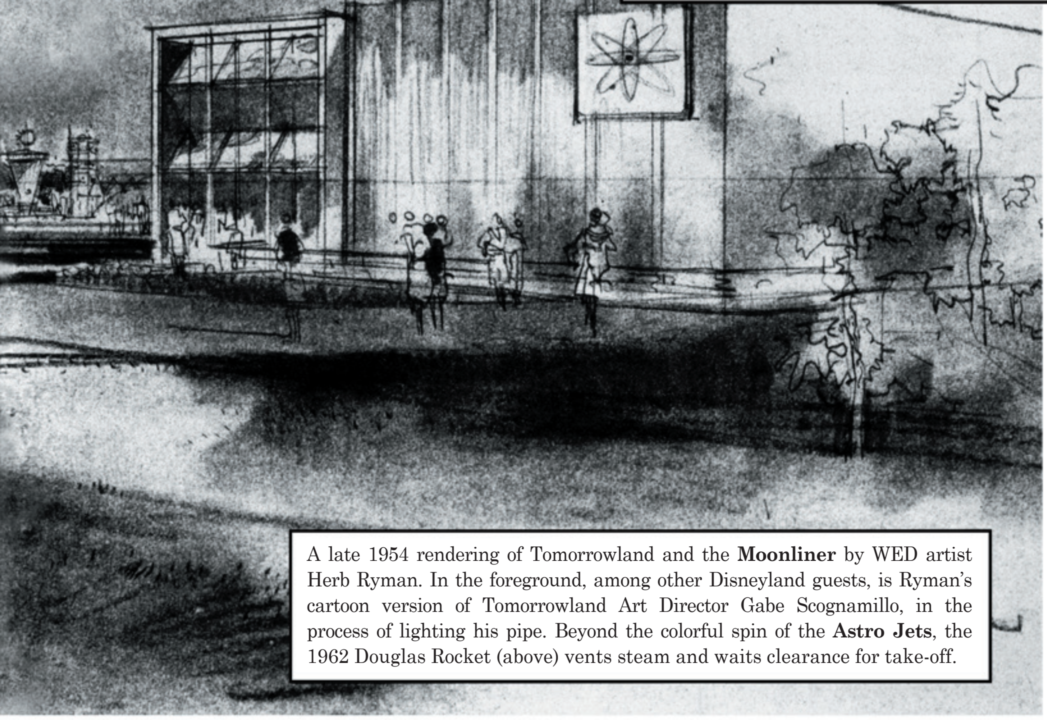
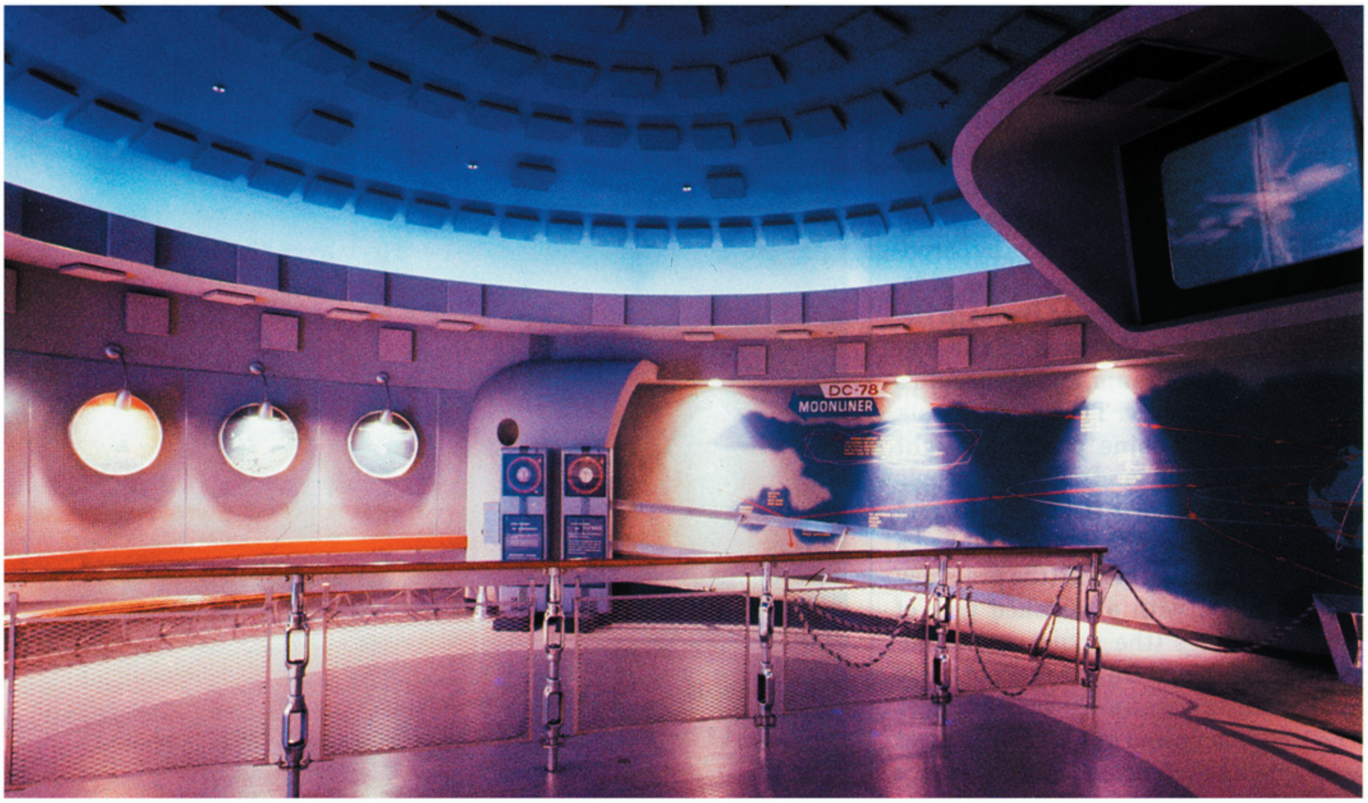
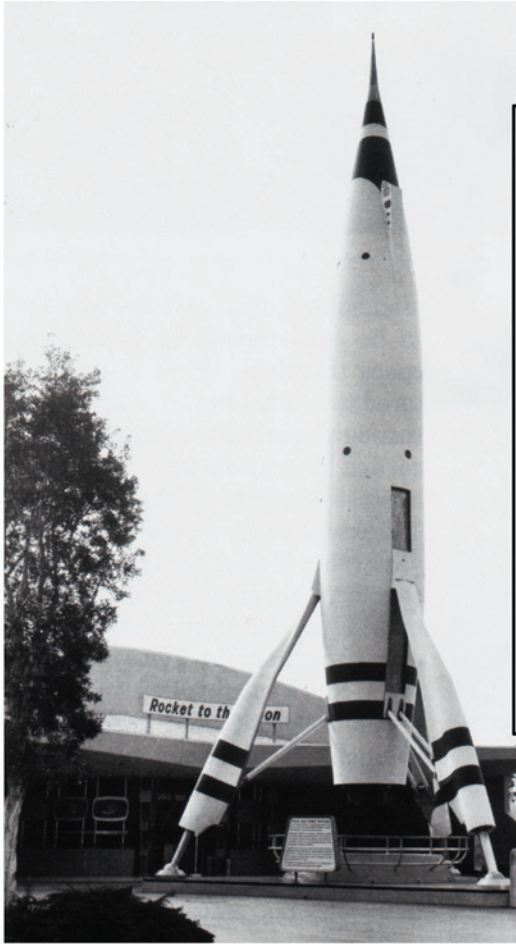
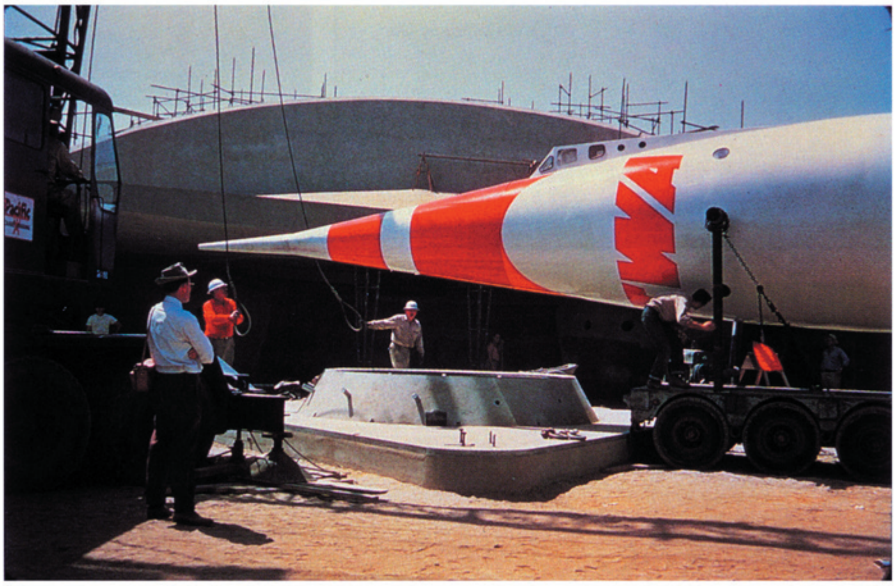


A late 1954 rendering of Tomorrowland and the **Moonliner** by WED artist Herb Ryman. In the foreground, among other Disneyland guests, is Ryman's cartoon version of Tomorrowland Art Director Gabe Scognamillo, in the process of lighting his pipe. Beyond the colorful spin of the **Astro Jets**, the 1962 Douglas Rocket (above) vents steam and waits clearance for take-off.

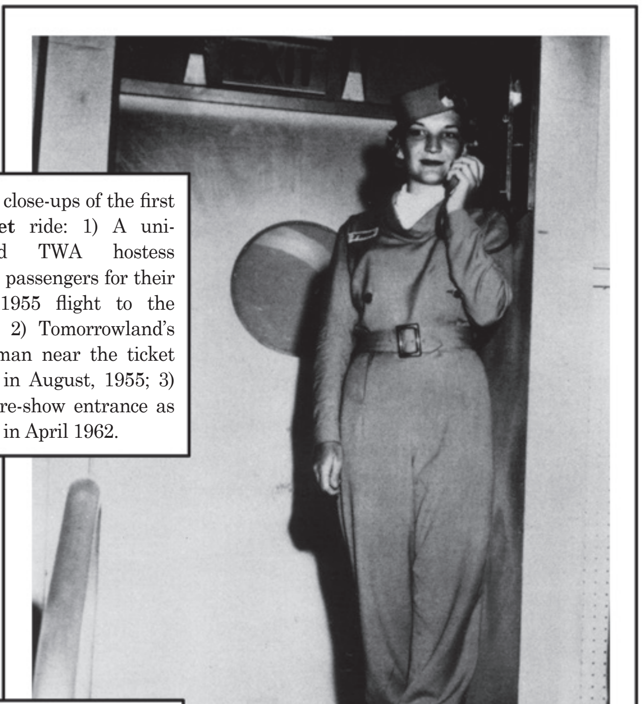


Tomorrowland's **Rocket** (left) towers above visitors as they near the **Moon** ride entrance. Above is the Briefing Room waiting area as it looked in 1962, with Douglas images on the projection screen. The **Moonliner** (below), still on its carriage is prepared for placement over the "blast hole."



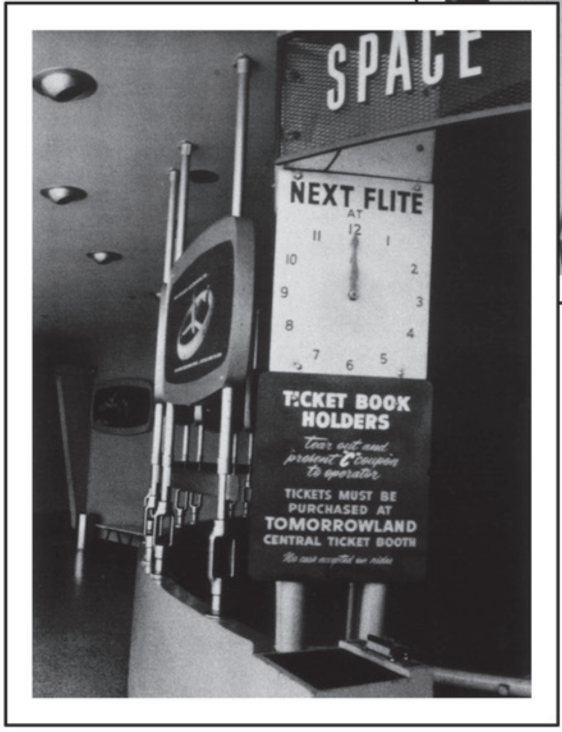


The fifteen minute wait in the Briefing Room went quickly as passengers watched this film, projected in 16mm from behind the screen. After a brief history of space exploration, the viewing audience received a preview of the voyage to the moon which they would soon experience. In the film's Control Center, an actor in uniform pointed to a cutaway passenger rocket displayed on the wall. Then, with a combination of live action and realistic animation, a TWA **Moonliner** (possibly the one just outside) was shown being launched on one of the scheduled flights to the moon. In the film's stylized and expanded portrayal of the Disneyland space port, the blast pit beneath the ship suddenly seethed with smoke and flame. The **Moonliner**, its pylons retracted, began its climb into space on a column of animated fire. Highlights of the moon flight were demonstrated with models, then the audience watched as the ship returned and landed safely in Tomorrowland. Timed with the pre-show's conclusion, disembarking passengers emerged along the outside of the space port and the next group was invited to enter the "space chamber." Below the pre-show screen was a swivel gate, alternately moved by the flight crew attendant in the direction of the next empty space chamber. In the ride's planning stages, and in advance publicity, the two **Moonliner** "sister ships" were called the *R.S. Diana* and the *R.S. Luna*. By the Park's opening, they were renamed the *Star of Polaris* and the *Star of Antares*. Within the attraction, guests followed signs (either left or right) pointing simply to the "**Moonliner**." They entered the corridor, made a tight, curving turn and moved toward one of two space chambers ... once inside, however, they were always aboard the *Star of Polaris*. The illusion of boarding a rocket on an outside launching pad was heightened for guests at this point. The final walk to the space chamber was along a spring-mounted ramp climbing upward to the room's sliding door. This length of floor, moving slightly, was enclosed in a 24 foot hallway of Neotex and aluminum, built in three sections which appeared to telescope tighter ahead. Distant sounds of workmen and space port noises could be heard through the partitions, and cold air movement suggested heights. Inside the chamber, passengers were moved to the left and right, down the stairs, and into the theatre's three-tiered circular sealing.



Three close-ups of the first **Rocket** ride: 1) A uniformed TWA hostess greets passengers for their July 1955 flight to the moon; 2) Tomorrowland's spaceman near the ticket booth in August, 1955; 3) The pre-show entrance as it was in April 1962.

ROCKET TO THE MOON
ROCKET
Rocket TO THE MOON
ADULTS CHILDREN
50¢ 35¢


SPACE
NEXT FLITE
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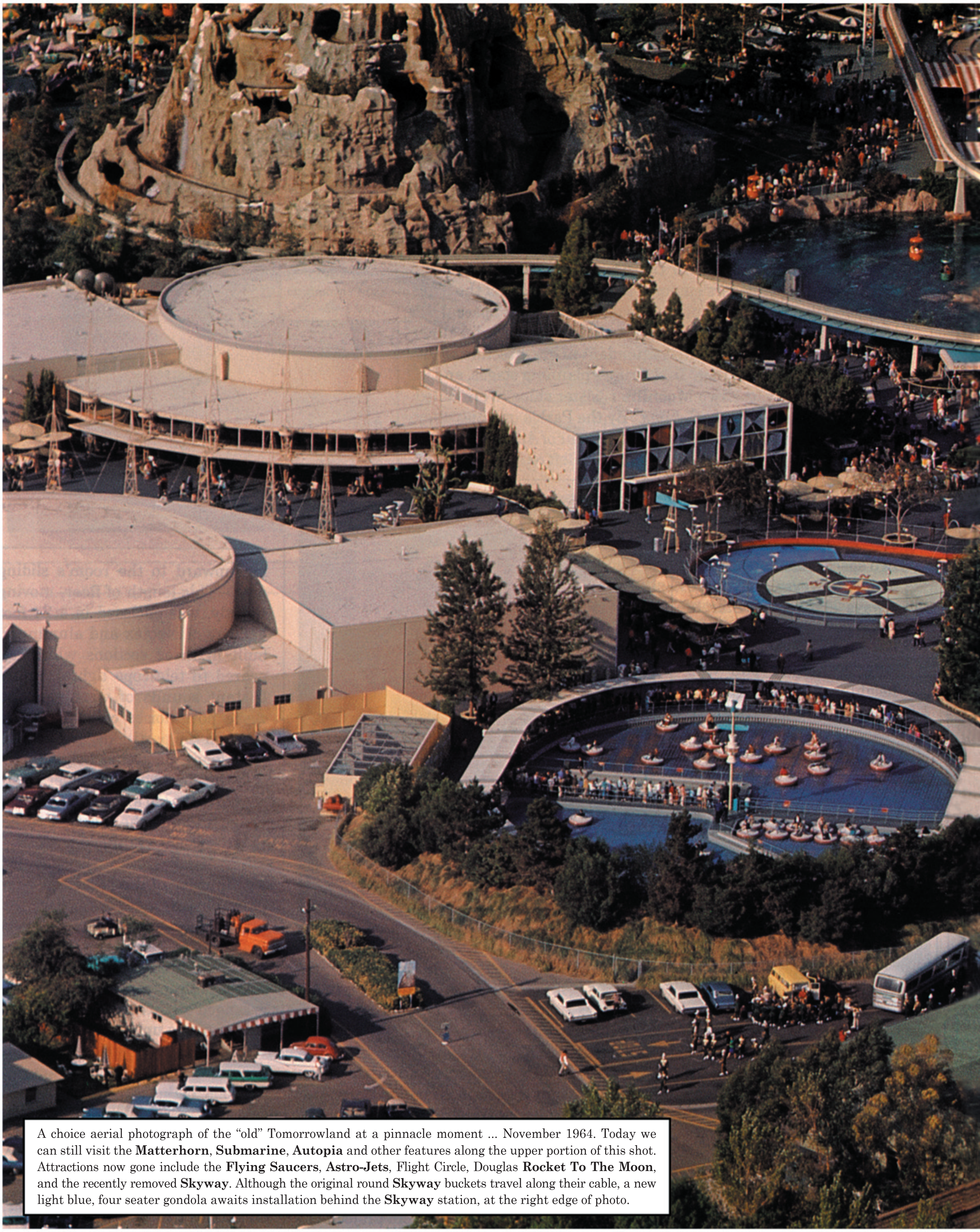
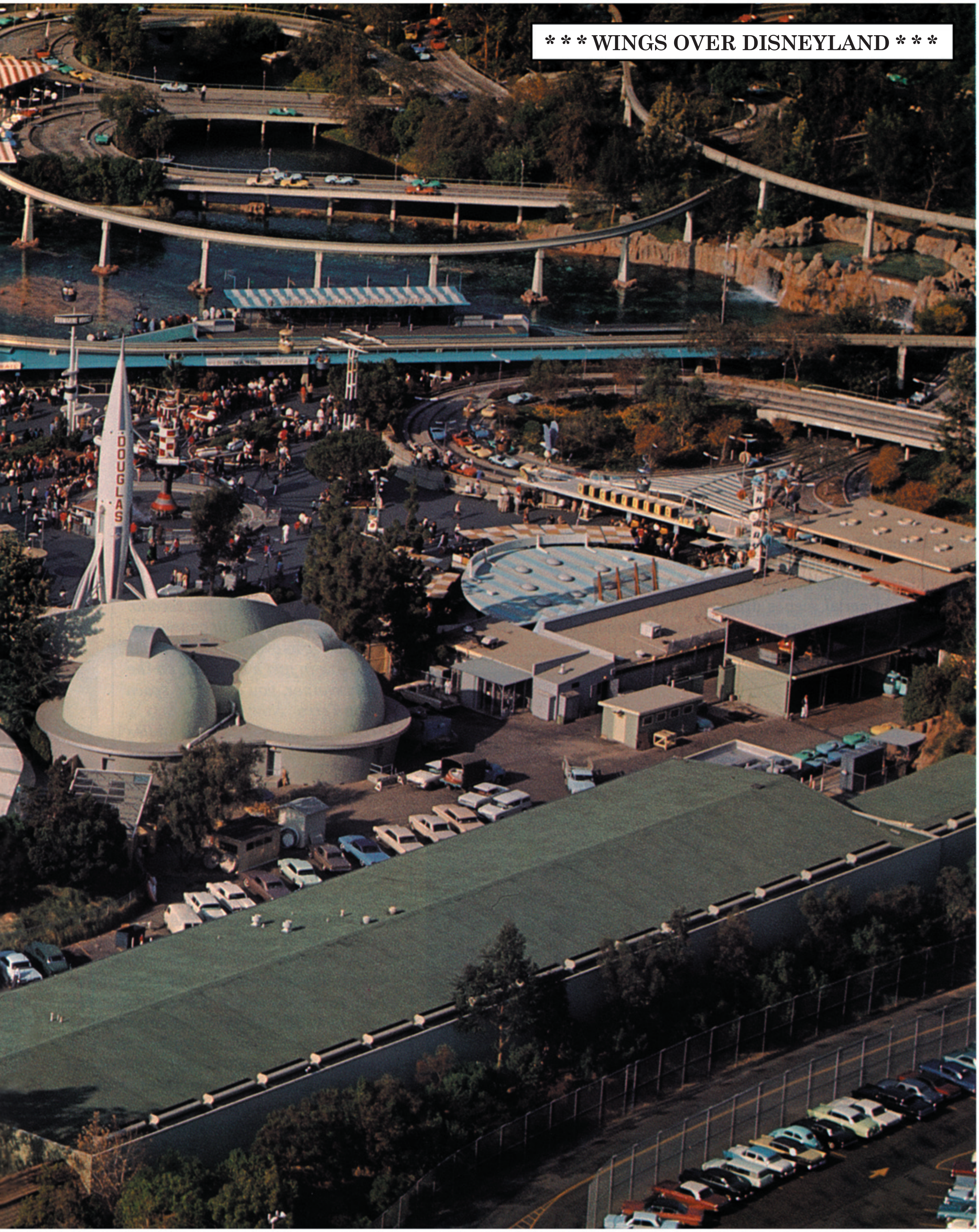
TICKET BOOK HOLDERS
tear out and present "E" coupon to operator
TICKETS MUST BE PURCHASED AT
TOMORROWLAND CENTRAL TICKET BOOTH
No cash accepted on rides

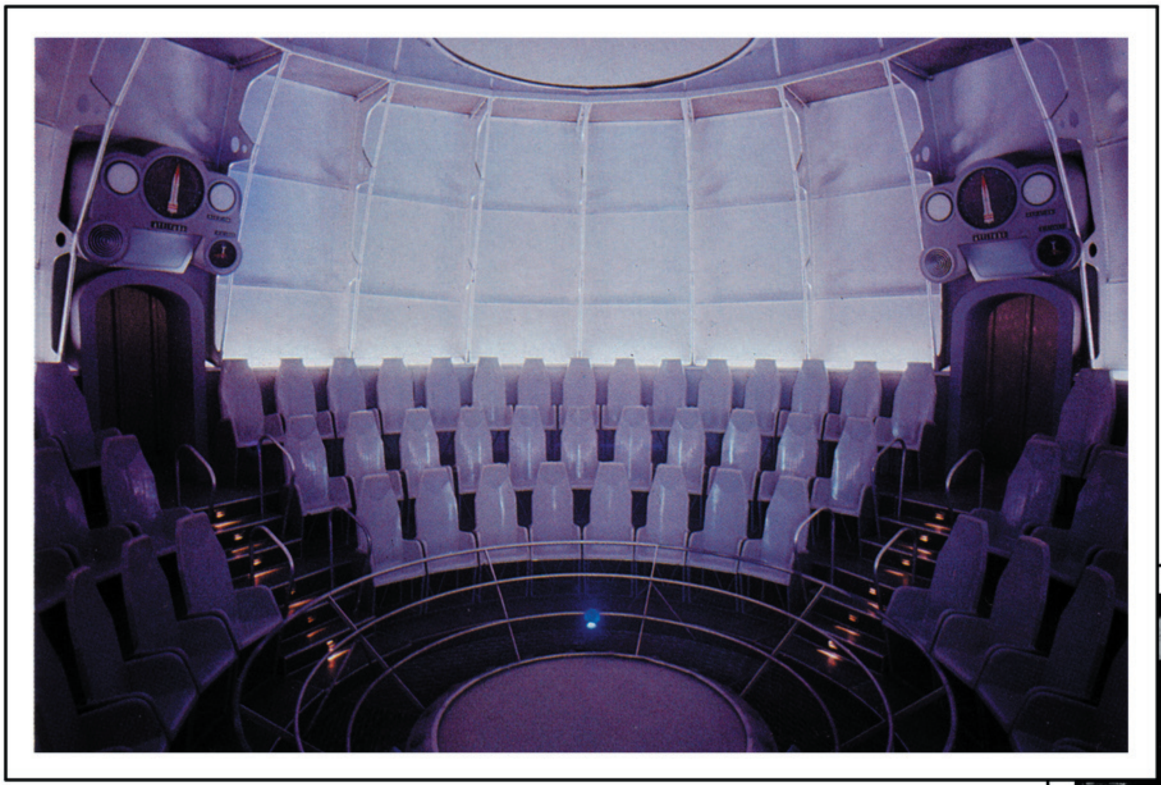
The interior of the passenger compartment was styled in a rather Spartan manner, suggesting that space flight would be a serious business. Guests (a total of 102 of them) entered through three doorways (which served as both entrances and exits) and selected one of the smooth plastic seats arranged on three levels, within the three passenger sections. Behind the seats, curving upward to the distant ceiling, were some notched and Verne-like aluminum bulkhead braces. These ornaments, and the three gray control panels above the doors, were the only concessions made to the stylized "space look" of the fifties. These control units featured dials, rectangular speakers, and red and white **Moonliner** indicators within round central screens. Once the flight was underway, these rocket dials graphically duplicated the alleged rotation of the space craft. At the center of both ceiling and floor were the space chamber's dominant features ... the upper and lower "scanner screens." Hidden mirrors were used to redirect images from projectors located outside the theaters. (continued)

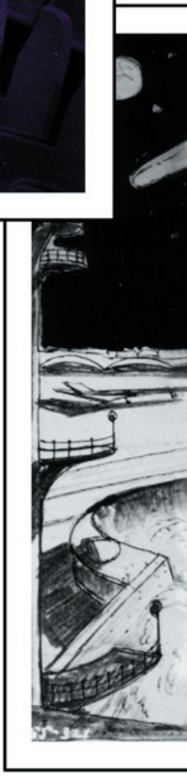


A choice aerial photograph of the “old” Tomorrowland at a pinnacle moment ... November 1964. Today we can still visit the **Matterhorn**, **Submarine**, **Autopia** and other features along the upper portion of this shot. Attractions now gone include the **Flying Saucers**, **Astro-Jets**, Flight Circle, Douglas **Rocket To The Moon**, and the recently removed **Skyway**. Although the original round **Skyway** buckets travel along their cable, a new light blue, four seater gondola awaits installation behind the **Skyway** station, at the right edge of photo.

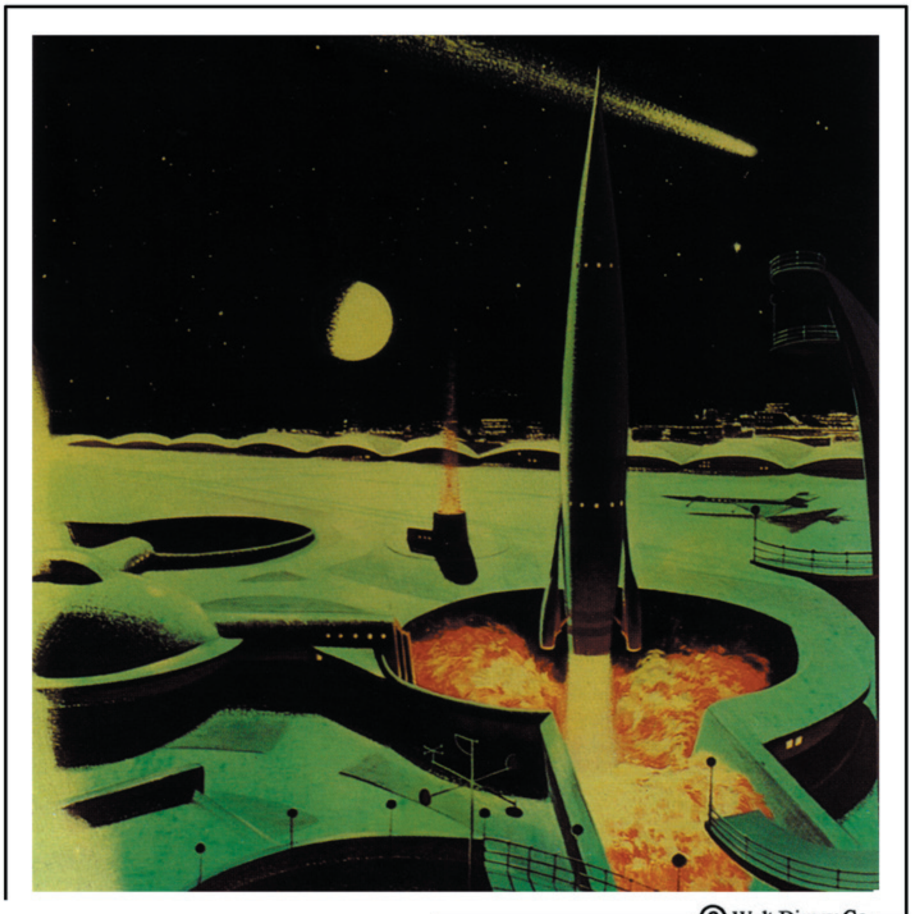

DOUGLAS

The upper projection paths, for instance, were contained in the ridges along the roof of the theater domes. These films, back-projected on the scanner screens, allowed passengers to visually experience the **Moonliner's** takeoff and flight through space. Their attention was alternately drawn to events shown above or below by the "rocket's cameras," fore and aft. It was this visual presentation, combined with the cabin's effects and the Captain's confident narration that formed such a memorable illusion.





After the countdown, for 25 exciting seconds, the **Moonliner** passengers felt their compartment vibrate, heard the rising pitch of harsh engine noise, and watched the lower screen as a series of aerial scenes dropped away, accenting the **Moonliner's** ascent into space. Then, with the sound of a sudden reverberating tone, the Captain resumed his narration: *"Attention please ... that was the breakthrough ... we've passed the sonic barrier, and our rate of climb has reached 1,000 feet per second. We're still in vertical flight but soon our course will curve taking us over the North Polar cap. Now in just a moment, on the upper scanner, you'll see the space station Terra. Now watch closely ... Terra travels at almost 16, 000 miles an hour, and we'll see her only briefly."* Here the audience got a glimpse of the same "space wheel" featured prominently in Ward Kimball's second *Man In Space* television program, *Man And The Moon.* Warmly lit by the distant sun, the spoked and tubular space station revolved slowly as it moved across the **Moonliner's** circular field of vision.



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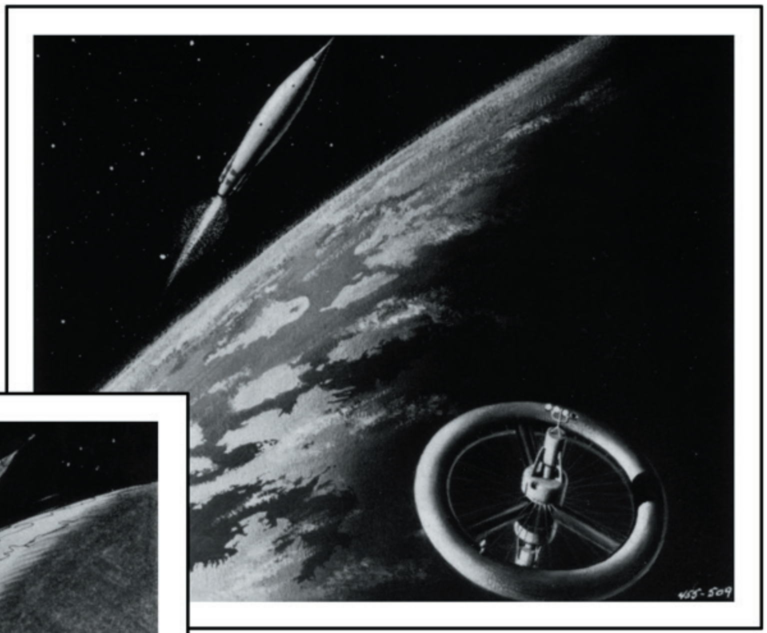
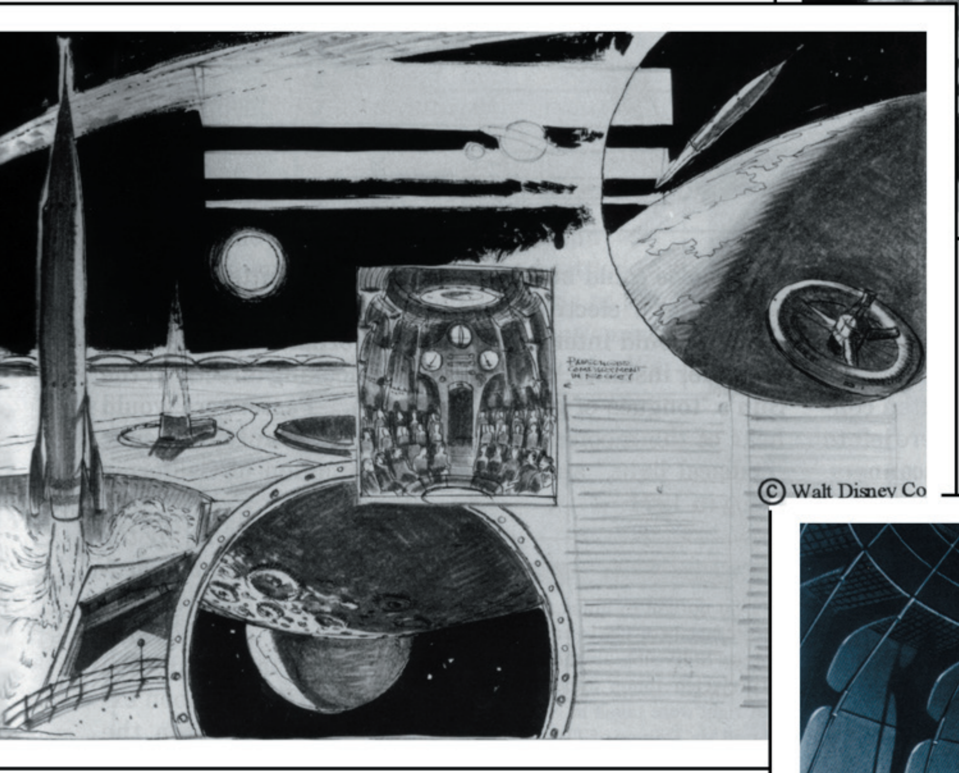
"Now, in the upper screen, the first glimpse of our goal ... the moon. The superimposed chart shows the exact point of interception. In a few moments our speed will reach 38 miles per second, and we'll be just about half way to the moon. But now, we must decelerate for our circle around the moon. To do this, we switch off our rockets, turn the ship over by gyro, then travel tail first and then use the rockets for brakes." At this point in the attraction, the Captain made use of his "telescopic scanner" and the upper screen to

show his passengers the sister ship, about 2,000 miles away, perform this operation on her return from the moon. Viewers watched this in relative silence, with only some low-volume “space noise” in the background. *“Now our ship will execute the same maneuver (... ‘Flight Control to Captain ... gyro control on’).”* As this end-over-end repositioning commenced, the images of the Earth and moon slid across their relative view screens, and replaced each other. This sequence was made more realistic as passengers heard a loud humming noise that rose and fell in time to the ship’s turning. These sounds ceased with a harsh metallic clank, as if some huge steel ratchet had fallen into its slot.

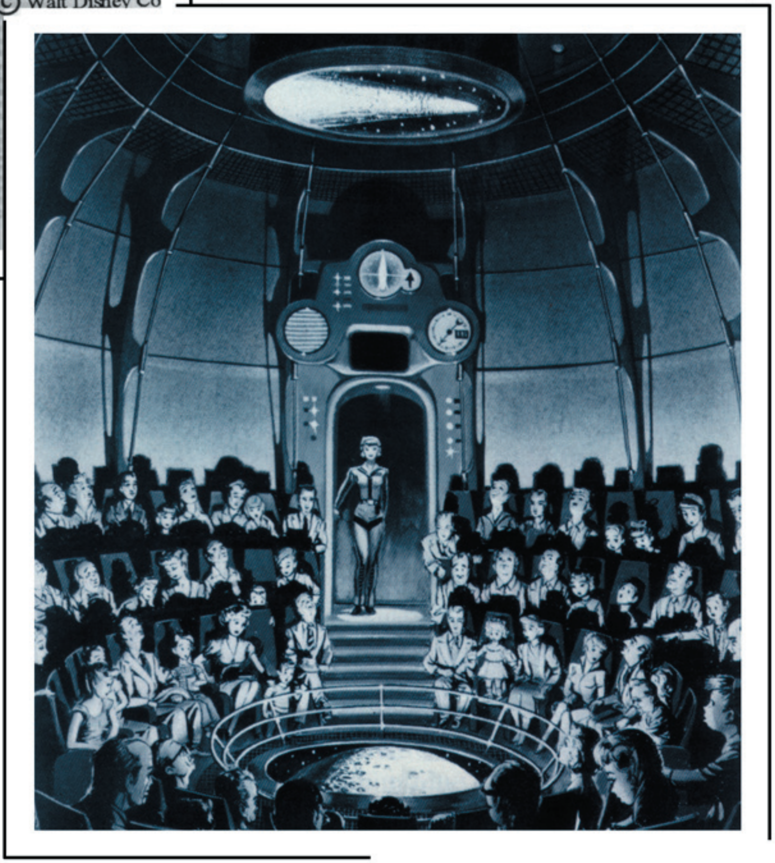
The **Rocket To The Moon** flight continued, with Halley’s Comet appearing on the upper scanner. Captain Collins’ information about the comet’s history was very timely since, at Disneyland, the projected year of that original Tomorrowland was 1986. What followed was a few quiet moments, as passengers watched the ship’s destination grow larger in the scanner. *“Since we’re flying tail first; it’s the lower scanner that shows our approach to the moon. Until the first space flight, in 1960, there was much speculation about the moon’s other side ... but when we release our flares, you’ll see that it’s much the same as the side facing the Earth.”*

“We’re nearly halfway around now, and in a moment, we will cross over into the moon’s night side. While we’re in its shadow, flares will be launched so that you may see more of the surface.” (...“Fire one”...) Now, as the attraction conveyed the mystery of the moon’s forbidden dark side, the **Rocket To The Moon** ride reached a high point of excitement and fantasy. As the **Moonliner** appeared to pass beyond the reach of Earth, strange alien music was heard in the background, which



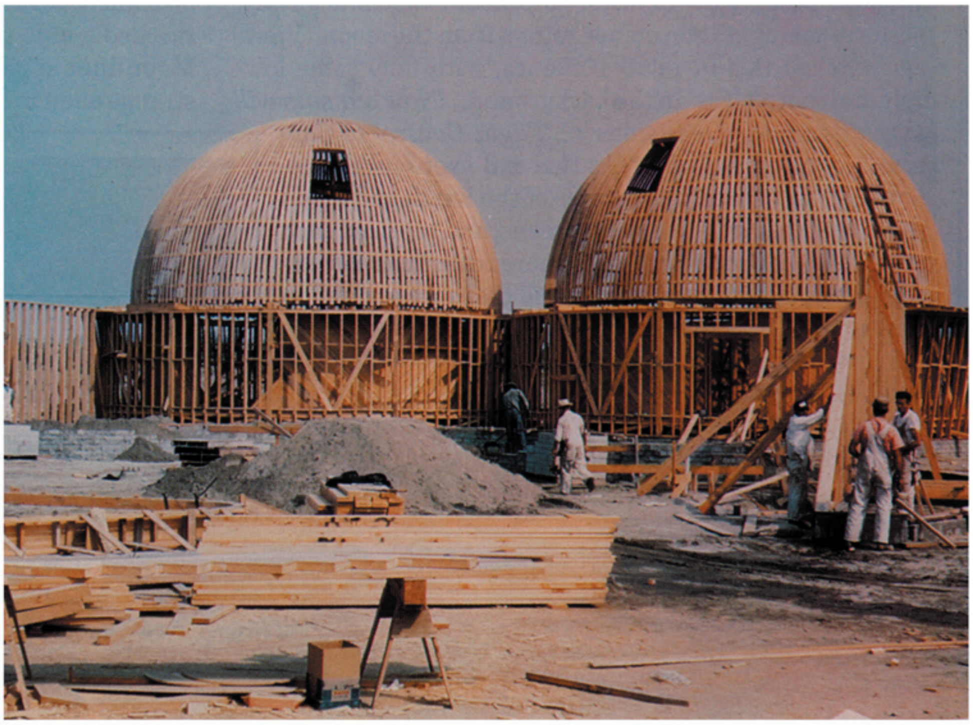


This set of 1955 concept drawings (by Imagineer John Hench) shows the attraction’s complex planning. All three images ... the **Moonliner** as it first lifts off (far left), as it circles the Earth past space station Terra (above), and as passengers view the moon in the rocket’s lower scanner ... are found in the composite artwork at left. At far left, the attraction’s “space chamber” is ready for passenger boarding in this September 1966 photo.

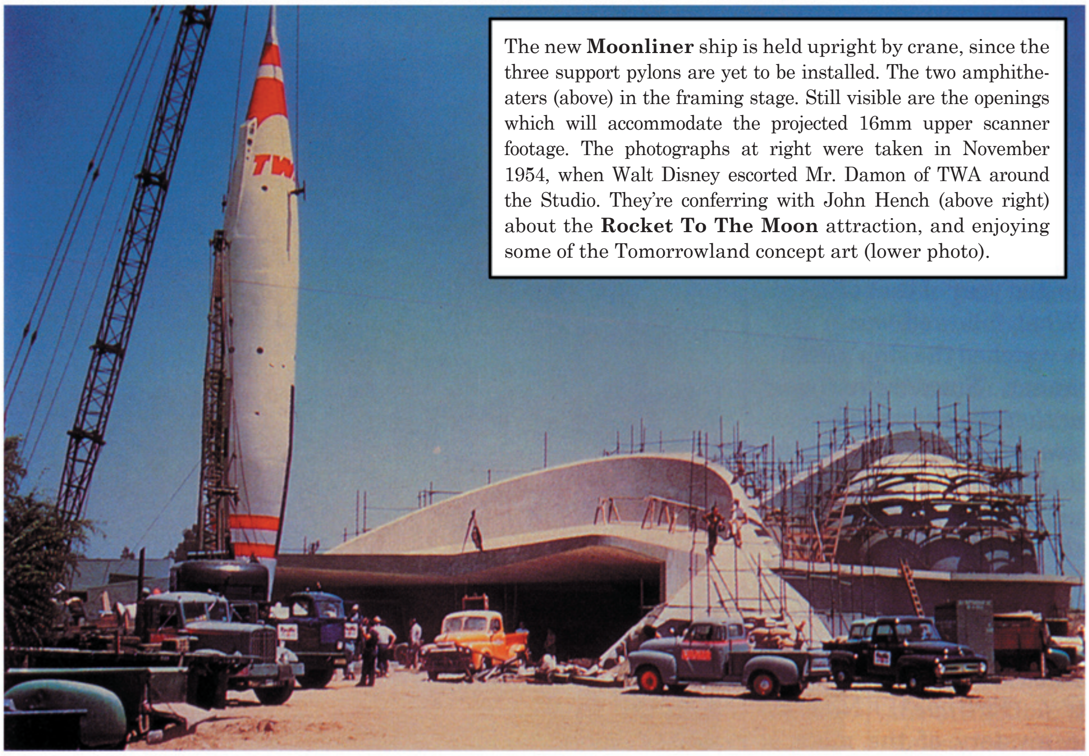


THUMBNAILS BOOKMARKS print find search the hub 24-25

effectively altered the mood of the audience. This sequence, that of animated footage of rocket flares firing brilliantly and briefly downward to the lunar landscape, worked extremely well. Disney's model of the moon's surface was convincingly seen in relief. Each crag and crater appeared in flare light, brightly at first, then fading into darkness, with many shadows adding to the reality. *(...“Fire two”...) “You can only observe this side of the moon from space, but as you can see, it's pretty much like the other side.” (...“Fire three”..)* Then, in the fading light of the falling flare, a symmetrical pattern on the moon's surface. *“There below us, is one of the great mysteries of the moon. Those ruins were left by intelligent beings who, quite possibly, came from far beyond our own solar system.”*



“As we complete our circle, the Earth again comes into view. During the trip back, the Earth will of course continue to turn, bringing California ... our destination ... into the proper position for our arrival, as indicated by the superimposed crosshairs.” The Captain's comments on the journey through space were often contrasted with periods of silence, and passengers were left to ponder the vastness of space rolling past on the scanners. Faint throbs, pulsing sounds, and an occasional spacey “up spin” noise could be heard, presumably emitted from the **Moonliner's** electronics. From time to time, Captain Collins would interject scientific information. He would warn, for instance, of the dangers of looking directly at the Sun's “tongues of glowing hydrogen.” Passengers would hear of the moon's first colony, of the beauty of cosmic “Zodiacal light,” and about the elimination of California smog in 1971.



The new **Moonliner** ship is held upright by crane, since the three support pylons are yet to be installed. The two amphitheaters (above) in the framing stage. Still visible are the openings which will accommodate the projected 16mm upper scanner footage. The photographs at right were taken in November 1954, when Walt Disney escorted Mr. Damon of TWA around the Studio. They're conferring with John Hench (above right) about the **Rocket To The Moon** attraction, and enjoying some of the Tomorrowland concept art (lower photo).

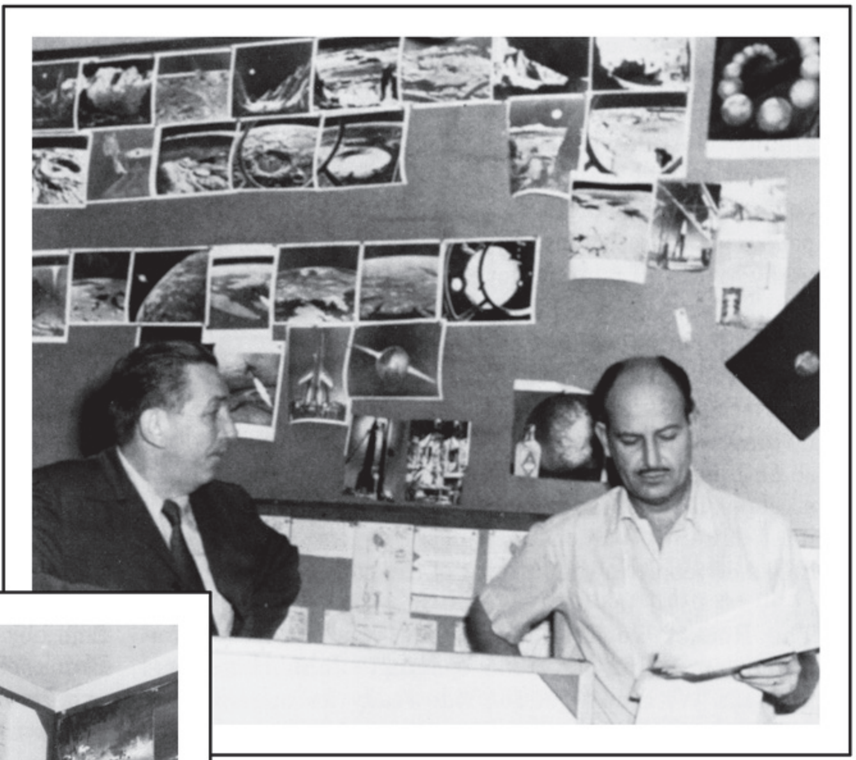
“Our return trip, by the way, is right on schedule, and now we'll execute our second turnover.” Once again the Earth and moon exchanged places on the scanner screens, and the loud humming, clanking noises again proved (to the ear) that the **Moonliner** was returning to Earth in the “stern-first” braking position. And as before, the audience watched the magnified upper screen in silence as the sister ship *Star of Antares*, on her outward journey to the moon, performed a similar maneuver. *“In just a moment we will re-enter the Earth's atmosphere, and*

don't worry if things get a little warm, it's perfectly normal for the ship to heat up as it slows down in the atmosphere. Our ship is on course and we'll soon be landing in ... STANDBY, PLEASE!"

At this point the **Moonliner's** return to Earth was interrupted by a sudden "bombardment." Excited passengers looked about the compartment as alarms, and sounds of high-speed debris striking the ship's hull, were heard. Slanting bolts of colorful static moved across the scanner screens, and then the Captain's reassuring voice came over the address system, *"Ladies and gentlemen, we've just passed through a shower of meteoroids, sometimes called 'shooting stars.' From the experience, I'd say the name is very appropriate. Our Engineer reports only minor damage to the ship. We are still right on course. We will be dropping below the speed of sound shortly and you'll again hear the roar of our rocket engines."*

First came the rushing whistle of outside atmosphere, then the increasing roar of rocket jets, as the **TWA Rocket To The Moon** balanced on her extended pylons and settled to Earth ... at least in the imaginations of the happy passengers. *"Ladies and gentlemen, we have just landed... at Disneyland. We were very happy to have had you aboard. We hope you enjoyed your TWA rocket flight, and that you will be flying with TWA again soon. This is your Captain, signing off."*

The circular space chamber, the upper and lower scanners, the journey as described by Captain Collins and visualized on the innovative projection screens ... all are favorite memories for Disneyland visitors of that era. But without a doubt the strongest image to survive the passage of time is the beautiful **Moonliner** itself. Imagineer John Hench was the project leader for the original **Rocket To The Moon** attraction, and designed the 76 foot tall rocket ship (it's considered to be 1/3 actual size) which stood outside. In a recent conversation, he told us, "I did the drawings for the rocket, yes. I was advised by both Willy Ley and Wernher von Braun at the time. They answered my questions about space travel, and what the actual rocket might be like. I suppose there is a little of the V2 rocket in its design. I made the drawings of the ship with its pylons flaring out, and the surrounding launching area. The building of it was actually kind of subtle. We used the same methods they use to manufacture boilers, at a boiler works. The hull didn't have that elegant shape, exactly, but we bridged it with a lot of little changes. And it worked all right, particularly when we got the curved sections up where perspective helped it." Made with a skeleton of structural steel, it was assembled in three sections. The largest was a 60 foot main cabin, nine feet in diameter, composed of 17 steel rings covered with 3/16 inch



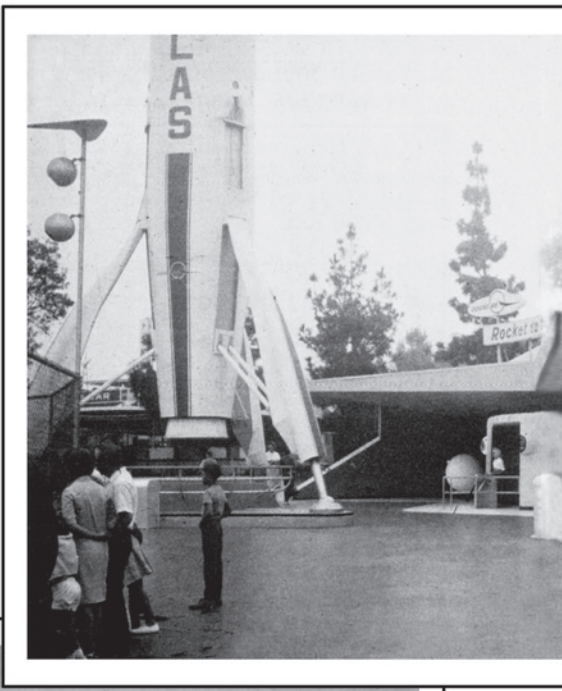
aluminum plating. The nose section was an additional 16 feet, and the three steel pylon legs were 22 feet long. A total of 15,000 square feet of aluminum "skin" was needed to complete the Moonliner's exterior.

The artwork which defined the 1955 **Rocket To The Moon** attraction was done by John Hench. The paintings and modified aerial photographs seen during take-off were Hench's (with some additional work by Peter Ellenshaw) as was the animation for the pre-show. "At that time we were so busy I couldn't get any help at the Studio, so I even had to shoot most of the film myself. I remember that, in the take-off footage, we had to put in clouds and interference on screen to cover the places where we cut in the photographs. The ride was set in theaters, with upper and lower screens, and we could bend the beams and project them down and project them up. I felt it was very critical that people look directly into the screens. I knew we needed many "truck-in" camera moves, since we would be leaving the Earth and approaching the moon. We tried it on a little mock-up I built on stage at the Studio, and I felt that the angle from the sides was too much at that point. I knew that if the viewing angle was too great, it wouldn't look as if things were dropping away. The effect would be that something was just moving out towards the edge of the screen ... it's the way perspective works when you look at it too flat. But Walt changed all this. He wanted a larger group of people in the interior of the rocket."

The **Rocket To The Moon** ride was not ready for Disneyland's July 17, 1955 opening. John Hench explained: "We didn't get the ride ready for opening day because some disgruntled electrician sabotaged the electrical work ... anyway, it wasn't working. The control mechanisms in there had to be rewired. On opening day we had to show the filmed portions of the ride on television, because the ride itself wouldn't function. I stayed there all night before the opening. Walt came in and he liked the interior, but he couldn't show an audience in it at that point. It took us about four days to get the **Rocket** ride open. Another problem we had was with the assembly area, which was exposed to the outside at first. People would watch the pre-show from outside, assume that that was the show, and walk on."

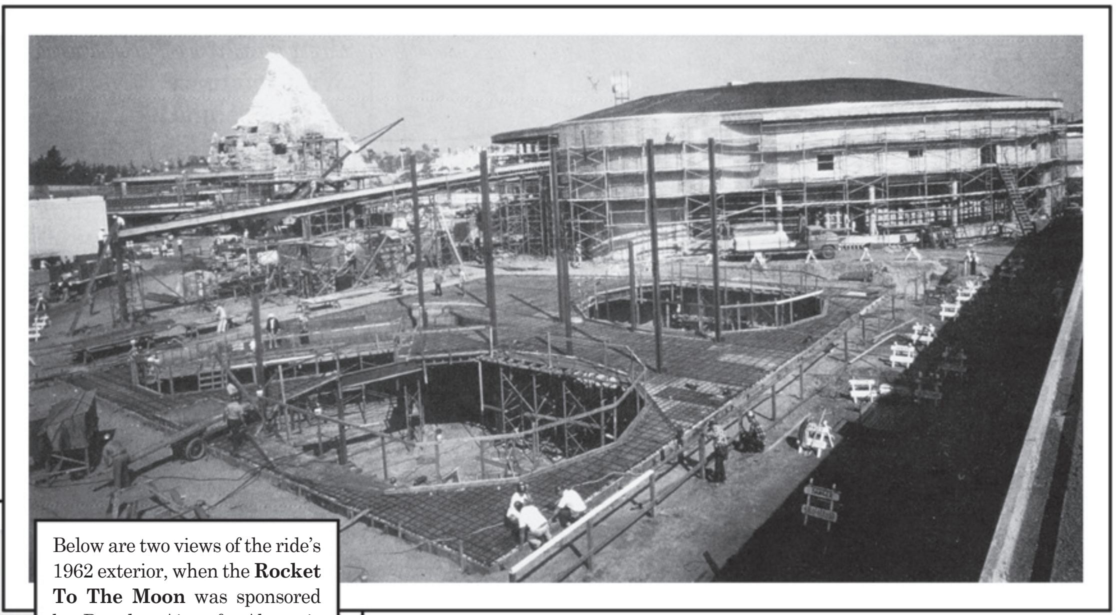
The attraction proved very successful, and John Hench describes its impact, "As you sat inside this rocket, and the rocket engines fired, you felt the motor vibrations. We had airjacks under the seats, for when the ship was cut loose and adrift. The effect of the ride was convincing enough to bring people back time and time again. It was exciting, at the time, and people went along with the idea of a rocket to the moon. I guess they suspended their disbelief." Disneyland space travelers were helped in accepting their imaginary trip around the moon by several clever elements within the ride's storyline. Sophisticated passengers, for instance, may have expected to experience the "weightlessness of space" once the **Moonliner** had escaped Earth's gravity. Disney had an excellent explanation why their weight remained unchanged. Not only did the ship's turn-over maneuver make for exciting viewing, it also explained that the ship's engines would first "boost" away from Earth and (once turned) act as a breaking force in descent, providing an artificial gravity throughout the trip. The Captain's description of the **Moonliner's** increasing speed, and the "break through" past the sonic barrier, satisfied questions about the lack of noise and other travel sensations. The biggest challenge to the ride's realism was the claim that the rocket could cross a half million miles in only fifteen minutes. Apparently this question was forgotten as Captain Collins provided impressive descriptions of interplanetary speeds ("38 miles a second") and as passengers became involved with the incidents and visual highlights of space travel.

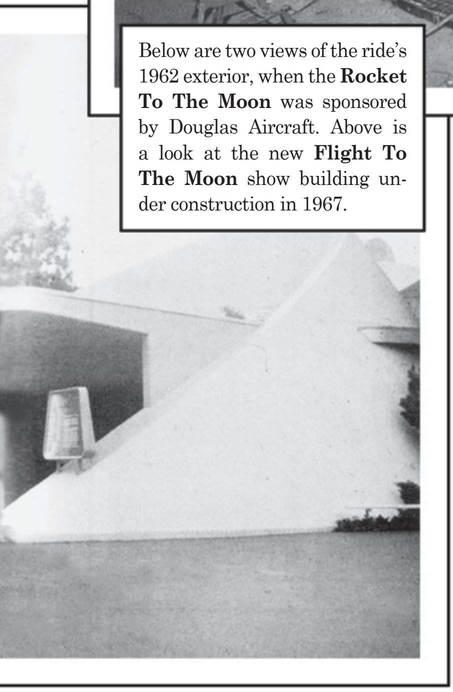
Even though they had much the same theme, the **Rocket To The Moon** attraction (for the Disneyland Park) was developed independently from the *Man In Space* programs (for the Disneyland television program). There were, however, a number of areas where both of these "Tomorrowland" projects may have shared material. Some common ground was inevitable with the widely announced "technical advice of noted space scientists Ley and Von Braun." These two experts met regularly with the designers and animators from both teams. Also, the practical benefits of sharing research material and models of the moon (provided by Griffith Observatory scientists



DOUGLAS
Rocket to the Moon

Hayward and Cleminshaw) made the lunar segments of both projects appear similar. Ward Kimball's second television show, *Man And The Moon*, offered the same storyline as the **Rocket To The Moon** attraction ... that of a rocket flight through space which circled the moon, and returned to Earth. As a result, both stories duplicated the take-off footage and showed Wathel Rogers' model of the "space wheel," Space Station Terra. Both shows had closely related material about the moon itself, and an exciting glimpse of its mysterious dark side. This very visual set-piece ... the spacecraft crew firing flares downward to illuminate the moon's secret surface ... was prominent in both stories.





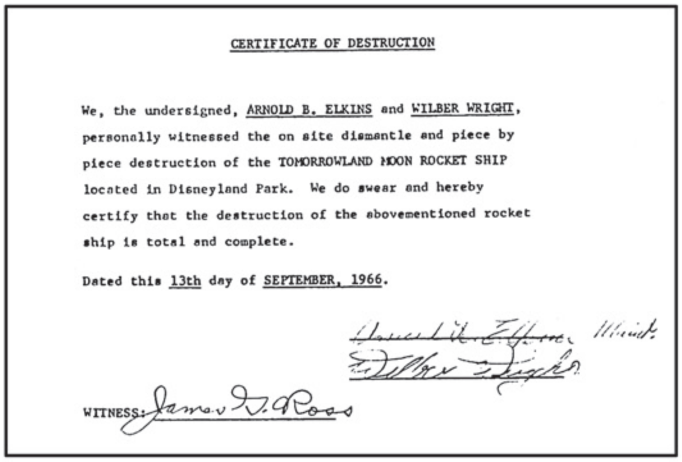
Below are two views of the ride's 1962 exterior, when the **Rocket To The Moon** was sponsored by Douglas Aircraft. Above is a look at the new **Flight To The Moon** show building under construction in 1967.

In the summer of 1962, official sponsorship for the **Rocket To The Moon** attraction was assumed by the aerospace company McDonnell Douglas. At the June 8 opening ceremony, Mr. Donald Douglas spoke to an audience that included Walt Disney, Joe Fowler, and the Tomorrowland spaceman. This new business relationship changed the signs, and the uniforms of the attendants, but the space chambers and the moon ride itself were mainly unaffected. An updated briefing film was prepared with Douglas images, for the pre-show area, under the direction of Claude Coats. New speakers and projection systems were installed, and the moon ships became known as DC-78 **Moonliners**.

The most visible evidence of the ride's new sponsorship was seen on the **Moonliner** itself, at the center of Tomorrowland. Gone was the TWA name, and the bold red bands which had encircled the nose and tail of the rocket. While no alterations were made to the rocket's structure, the lettering and striping of the Douglas version made a significant difference in its appearance. The white, unadorned surface of the first **Moonliner** had forced the perspective and made the distance from pylon to tiny cockpit seem more than it was. The 1962 paint scheme's large block letters and heavy vertical stripe seemed to shorten the Douglas rocket considerably.

Two years later, with his commitment to doing four major shows for the 1964 New York World's Fair, Walt Disney and his Imagineers had entered a time of ambitious and exciting technical innovation. While his World's Fair sponsors helped fund the perfecting of **Mr. Lincoln** and other Audio-Animatronic applications, Walt planned for their relocation to Disneyland at the Fair's conclusion. These new attractions (and more realistic animation within existing rides) would soon be found throughout the Magic Kingdom, but Tomorrowland was to be updated completely. The twenty-three million dollar "New Tomorrowland ... a world on the move" was announced for Summer 1967. The **WEDway PeopleMover** would connect many brand new attractions, including the Bell System's **America The Beautiful**, General Electric's **Carousel of Progress**, Monsanto's **Adventure Thru Inner Space** ... and the McDonnell Douglas **Flight To The Moon**.

By September 1966, the moon ride had a new name, but

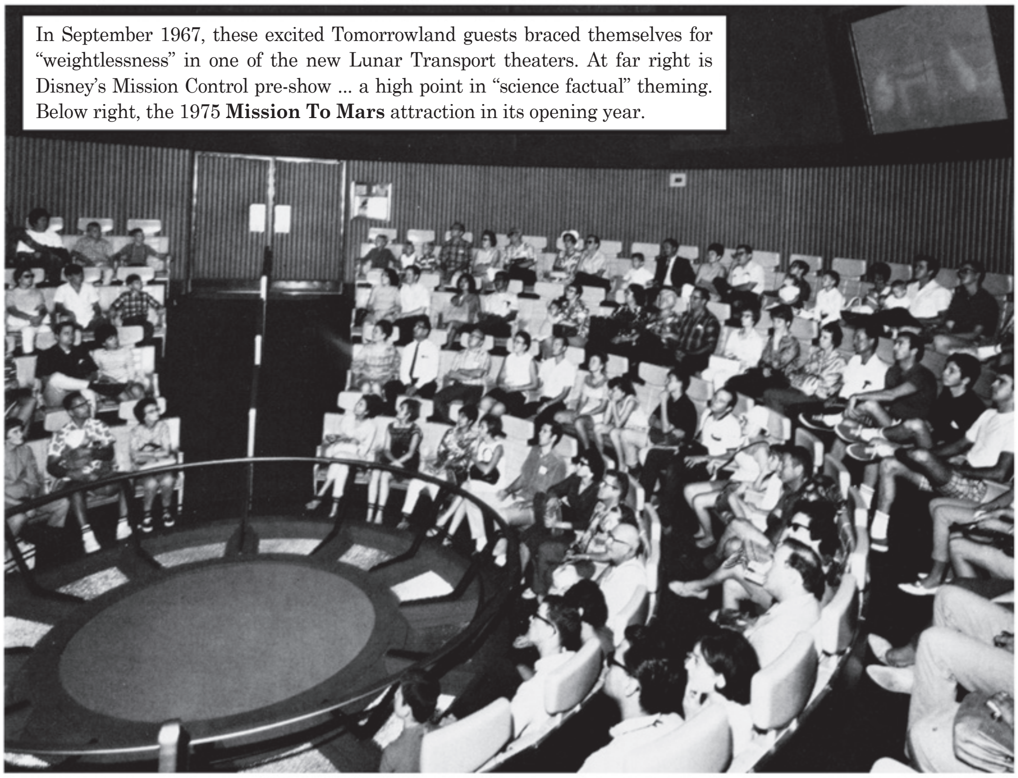


CERTIFICATE OF DESTRUCTION

We, the undersigned, ARNOLD B. ELKINS and WILBER WRIGHT, personally witnessed the on site dismantle and piece by piece destruction of the TOMORROWLAND MOON ROCKET SHIP located in Disneyland Park. We do swear and hereby certify that the destruction of the abovementioned rocket ship is total and complete.

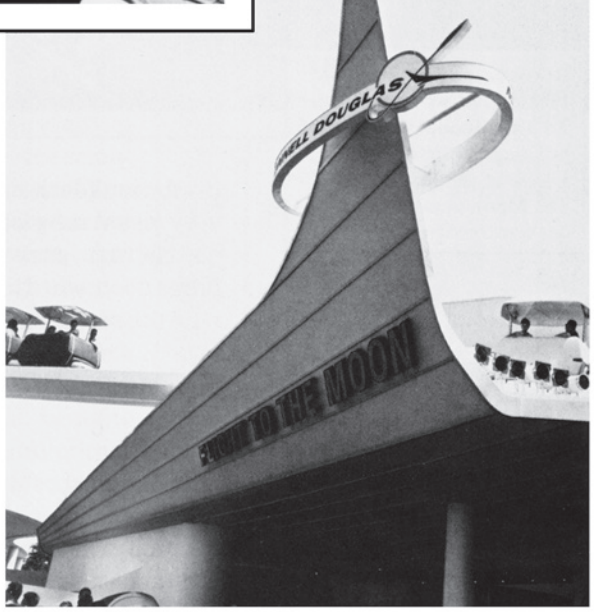
Dated this 13th day of SEPTEMBER, 1966.

WITNESS: James G. Ross



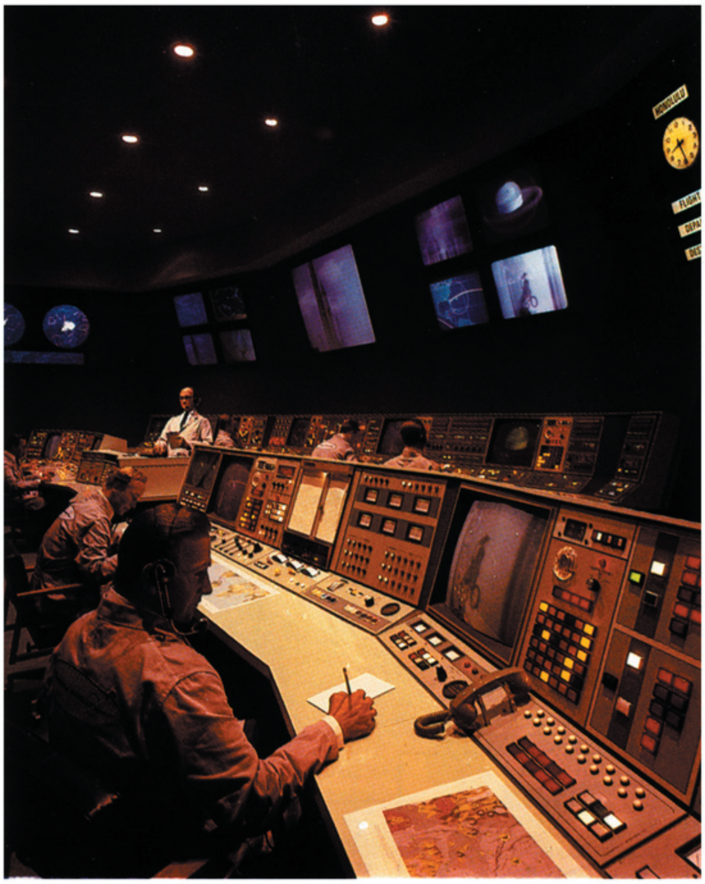
In September 1967, these excited Tomorrowland guests braced themselves for "weightlessness" in one of the new Lunar Transport theaters. At far right is Disney's Mission Control pre-show ... a high point in "science factual" theming. Below right, the 1975 **Mission To Mars** attraction in its opening year.

it was also to be moved to a new location. Prior to the Summer of 1967, the entire Tomorrowland area southeast of the **Matterhorn** underwent major construction. The "on site dismantle and piece by piece destruction" of the **Moonliner** rocket was certified to be total and complete (on September 13) by Disneyland personnel. The original space port and theater structure was removed at that time, and the new Carousel Theater went up in its place. Tomorrowland's **Flying Saucers** attraction was also removed, clearing the way for a new **Flight To The Moon** show building, to be built in that area. This moon ride had no signature spacecraft outside, but it did have a futuristic spire, encircled by the Douglas logo, pointing upward from the attraction's curved and sweeping entrance. Within were two similar but larger "Lunar Transports" (previously known as space chambers) and a showcase for Disney's breakthrough in Audio-Animatronics ... Mission Control.



In July of 1967, the first Tomorrowland visitors entered the new **Flight To The Moon**. They waited a few minutes in an elongated foyer with walls that curved up and overhead, and watched illuminated signs that counted down the minutes to the next flight. Soon the doors at the far end of the room opened, allowing people to file in and stand along terraced walkways. The audience, separated by railings, turned to face the glass panels where Mission Control, the "nerve-center of Disneyland's spaceport," was displayed. Inside, the eight Audio-Animatronic members of the busy "space operations" crew were seated along two rows of computers. With flashing indicator lights and viewing screens of various sizes, the soft-voiced "cross talk" of the crew was heard as they moved their arms and nodded their heads. This scene served as background to the standing figure, in white lab coat, which then turned and addressed the audience. Notepad in hand, microphone near his mouth, the Control Center Director, *Mr. Tom Morrow*, explained to the audience what was to come during their **Flight To The Moon**. With reference to various screens behind him he told how ships were launched, quickly handled a mysterious UFO sighting, then described preparations for the upcoming "Flight 92." As the final minutes to their launch elapsed, the passengers were asked to follow the attendant to the boarding area.

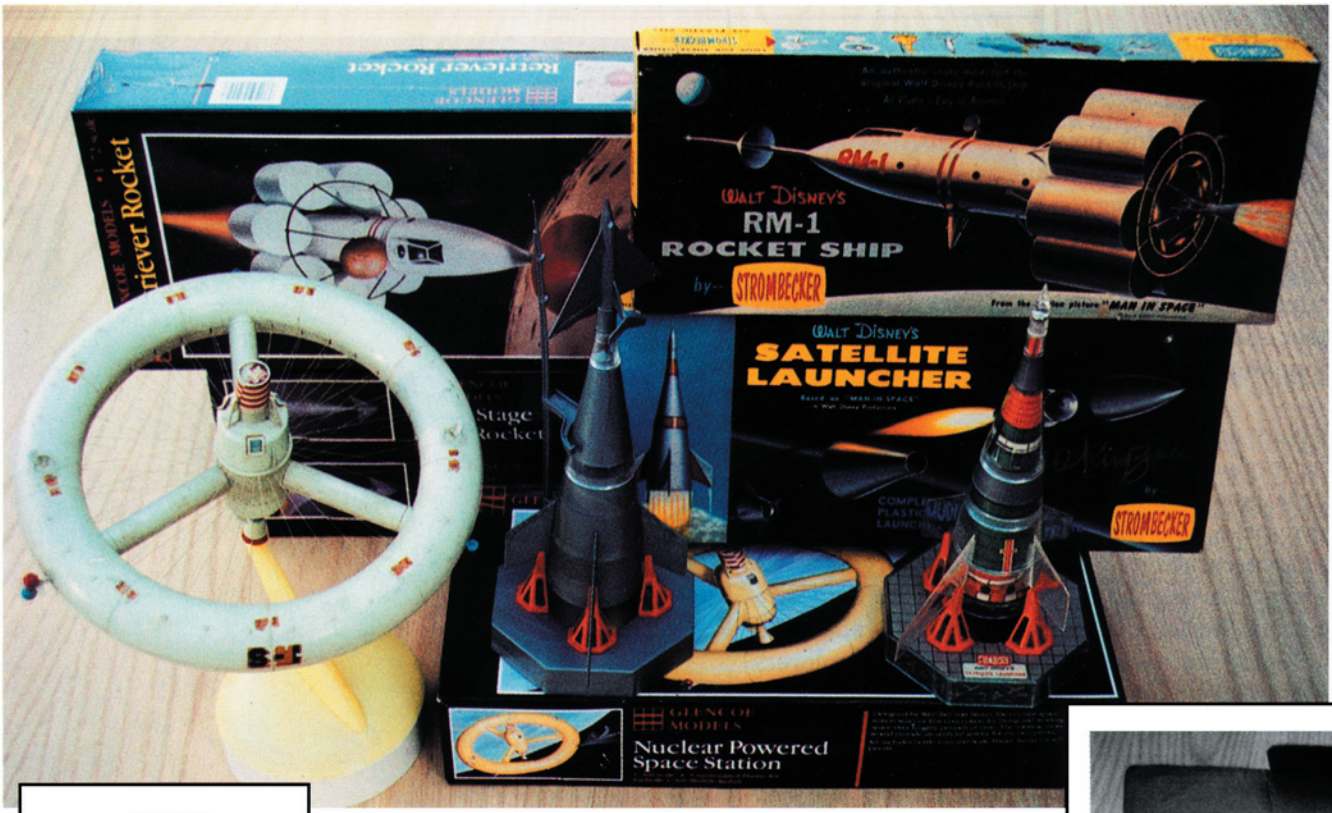
The interiors of the Lunar Transport theaters were larger, updated versions of the original circular space chambers. The seats (slightly wider, 162 total) were arranged in two sections, along four rows. The compartments had two doors (one an entrance, the other an exit) and opposite each other above the passenger sections, were two rectangular projection screens. The **Flight To The Moon**, having the same theme as the previous **Rocket To The Moon** ride, repeated many elements of the original. Aerial photos were seen in the lower screen during take-off, with vibrations and engine noises felt and heard before super-sonic speeds were achieved. The Earth was replaced in the lower screen by the moon, after turnover, and like the original ride, flares were fired at the moon's dark side as the craft completed its orbit. Before returning safely to Earth, this ship also passed through a meteor shower and "fortunately no serious damage was done to the ship."



There were new elements and improvements devised for this version of the moon ride. The four and a half minute Mission Control pre-show, staffed with animated figures, was a breakthrough for its time and offered an accurate view of America's emerging space technology. During the nine minute moon flight, two screens mounted on the compartment walls showed a "live" telecast from the moon's surface. Space explorers near the moon colony complex were shown gathering Lunar ore samples. They told of their "astronomical telescope," and demonstrated some of the lively movements made possible by the moon's reduced gravity. And this version of the moon ride provided, for the first time, the experience of "weightlessness." This was accomplished with a system of 162 mechanized, movable lower seat cushions. During take-off, passengers felt the press of gravity, as their seats lowered beneath them. When the ship's engines cut off for the "mid-course maneuver," surprised space travelers actually rose in their seats to the sensation of "partial weightlessness."

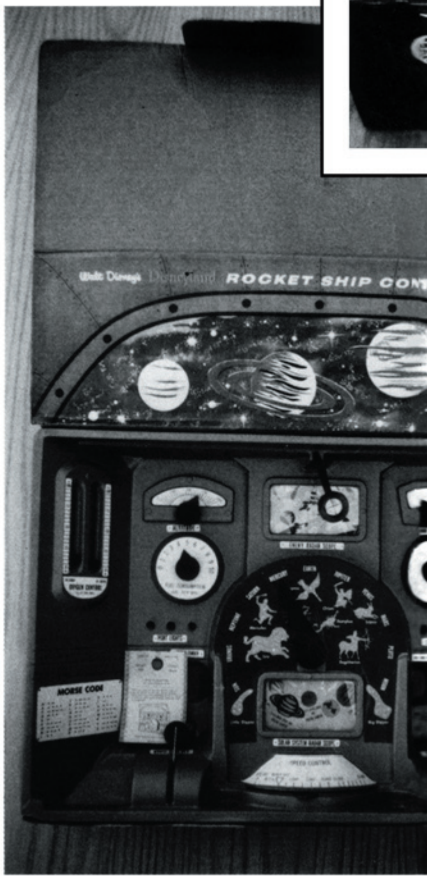
As the sixties drew to a close, the **Flight To The Moon** attraction offered space entertainment which was reasonably accurate but not very futuristic. The moon ride's once-shocking concepts ... a passenger rocket launch, weightlessness, the moon being within reach ... had by the end of the decade, become current events. On July 20, 1969, the Apollo Eleven mission made man's long-held desire to walk on the surface of the moon an accomplished reality. Much of Disneyland's **Flight To The Moon** ride remained factual, and fit well with NASA's latest scientific information, but it was only a matter of time. By the end of 1974, the decision to close and redesign the attraction was reached. After nearly twenty years, Disney's moon ride would make an ironic change in its flight plan. Like the final episode of the *Man In Space* television programs of the fifties, it's destiny would be to visit *Mars And Beyond*. Man had achieved the moon. In April of 1975, Tomorrowland's newest attraction became the futuristic **Mission To Mars**.

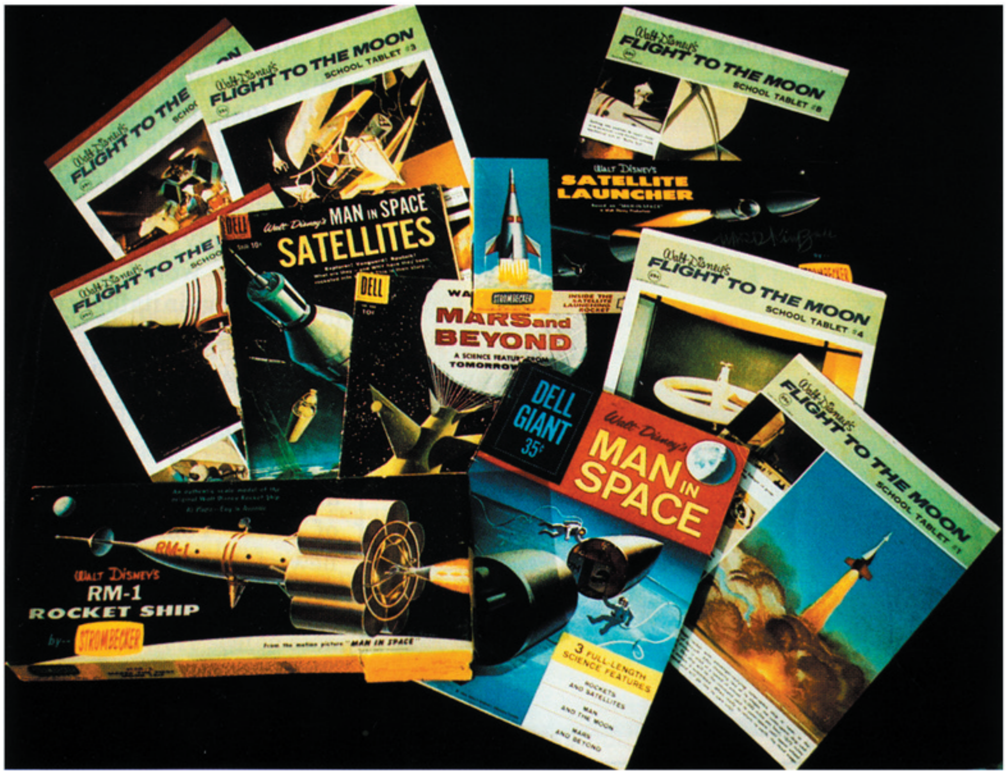
MISSION TO MARS


Retriever Rocket
GLENCOE MODELS
Walt Disney's
RM-1
ROCKET SHIP
by STROMBECKER
From the motion picture "MAN IN SPACE"
Walt Disney's
SATELLITE
LAUNCHER
STROMBECKER
Stage
Rocket
GLENCOE MODELS
Nuclear Powered
Space Station

STROMBECKER
AIR-SPACE MODELS

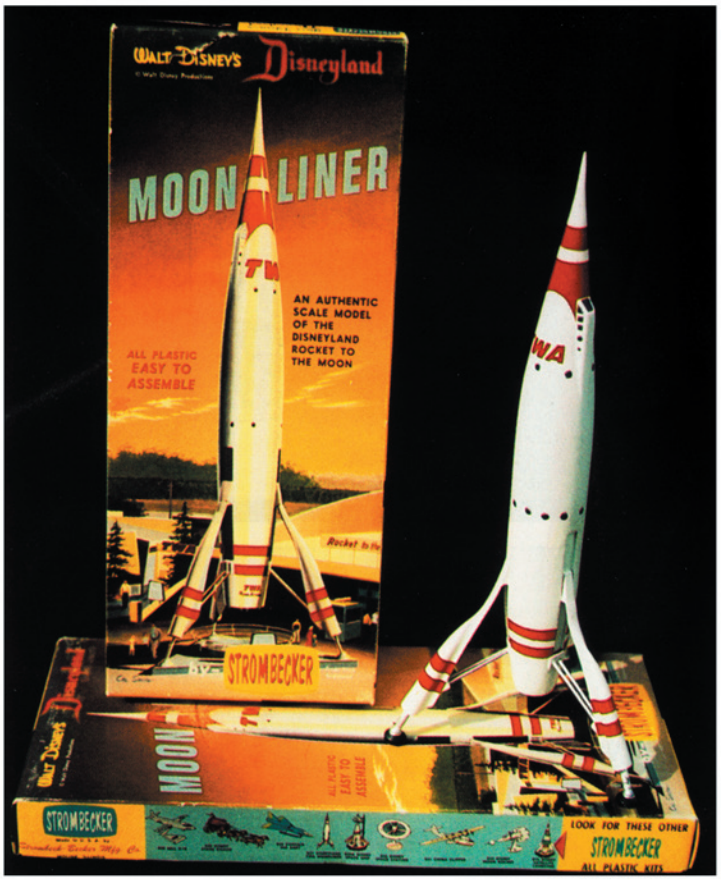
The *Disney Man In Space* television productions made extensive use of space craft miniatures from their Studio model shop. It was only natural that the Strombecker Manufacturing Co. would offer these four plastic replicas (above) for sale to the public. Included in the series were; D26/Man-In-Space Ship, D32/Walt Disney's Space Station, D34/RM-1 Rocket Ship, and D35/Satellite Launcher. Advertised in the 1950's as "red hot items to tie in with daily space headlines," they're now quite rare. In 1993, three of these were re-released in different packaging by Glencoe Models. They omitted kit D35, and claimed no Disney connection. The *Man In Space* phenomenon inspired other merchandise including the comic books and school tablets shown at left. The Rocket Ship Control Board, made in 1955 by Baxter toys (above), is much like the indicator panels above the doors in the original **Rocket To The Moon** ride. This scarce toy has moving dials and scopes, wooden knobs, buzzers and lights.


Walt Disney's Disneyland ROCKET SHIP CON
MORSE CODE

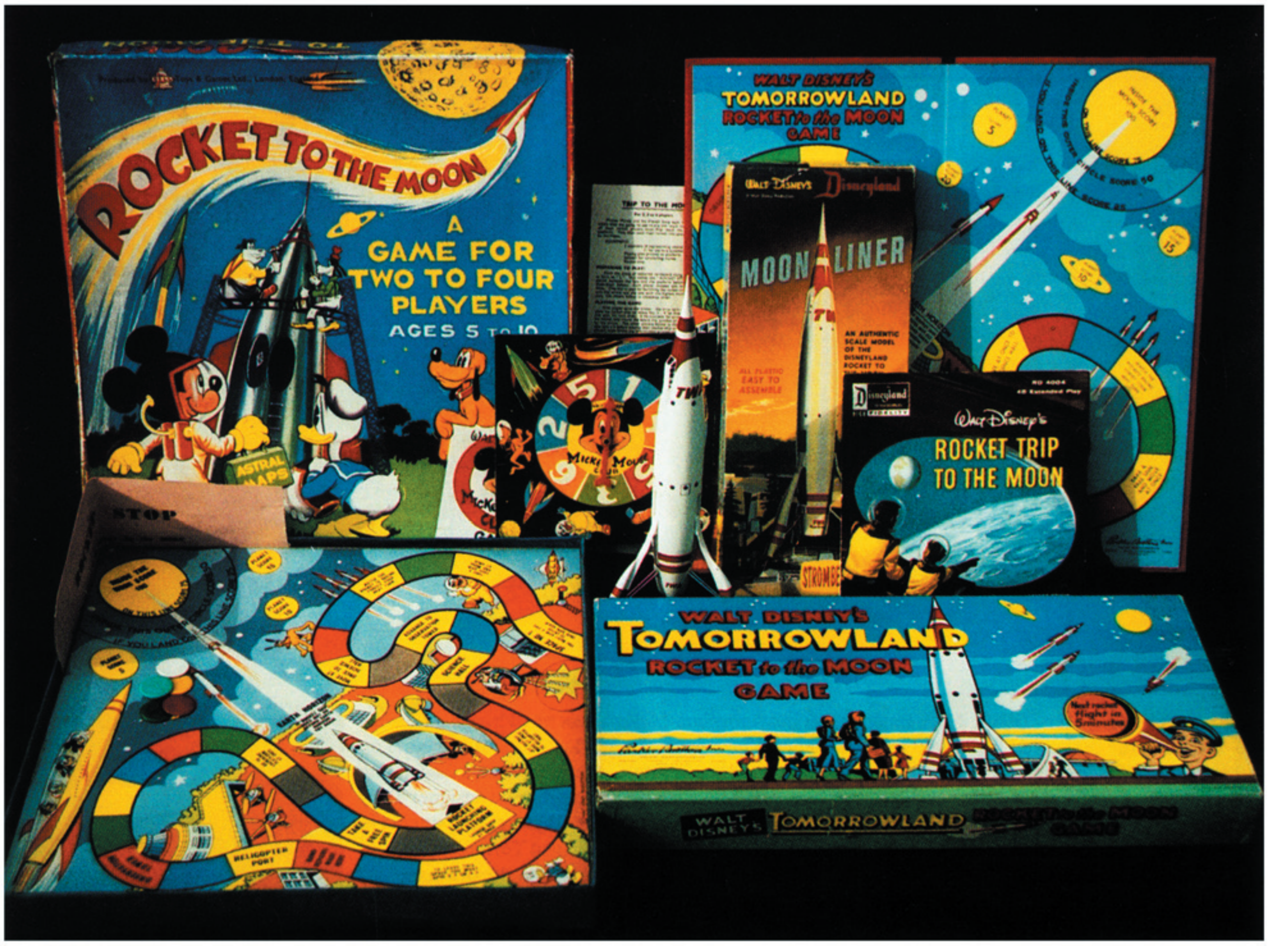

Walt Disney's FLIGHT TO THE MOON SCHOOL TABLET
Walt Disney's MAN IN SPACE SATELLITES
DELL
Walt Disney's SATELLITE LAUNCHER
MARS and BEYOND
DELL GIANT 35¢
Walt Disney's MAN IN SPACE
3 FULL-LENGTH SCIENCE FEATURES
Walt Disney's RM-1 ROCKET SHIP
STROMBECKER

* * * COLLECTOR'S CORNER * * *

The fifth Disney space craft in the Strombecker series was kit D27/Moonliner, based on the Park attraction. With its white fuselage, red decals, souvenir instruction sheet and box (at right), kids could "play Disneyland" no matter where they lived. Sounds of "blast off, meteorites, and outer space" from the **Rocket To The Moon** ride were heard on the Disneyland 45 RPM record #RD 4004 (bottom photo). Also shown is the familiar Parker Bros. moon game and the enhanced version, issued in England, with re-drawn artwork. It featured the universally recognized Disney characters with space suits, aboard the rocket.


WALT DISNEY'S Disneyland
MOON LINER
AN AUTHENTIC SCALE MODEL OF THE DISNEYLAND ROCKET TO THE MOON
ALL PLASTIC EASY TO ASSEMBLE
STROMBECKER
MOON
STROMBECKER
LOOK FOR THESE OTHER STROMBECKER ALL PLASTIC KITS

WALT DISNEY'S Disneyland
ROCKET SHIP CONTROL BOARD
Walt Disney's
ROCKET SHIP CONTROL BOARD


ROCKET TO THE MOON
A GAME FOR TWO TO FOUR PLAYERS AGES 5 TO 10
ASTRAL MAPS
WALT DISNEY'S TOMORROWLAND ROCKET to the MOON GAME
WALT DISNEY'S Disneyland
MOON LINER
STROMBE
Disneyland
Walt Disney's ROCKET TRIP TO THE MOON
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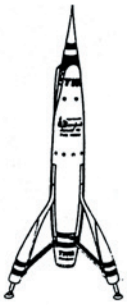
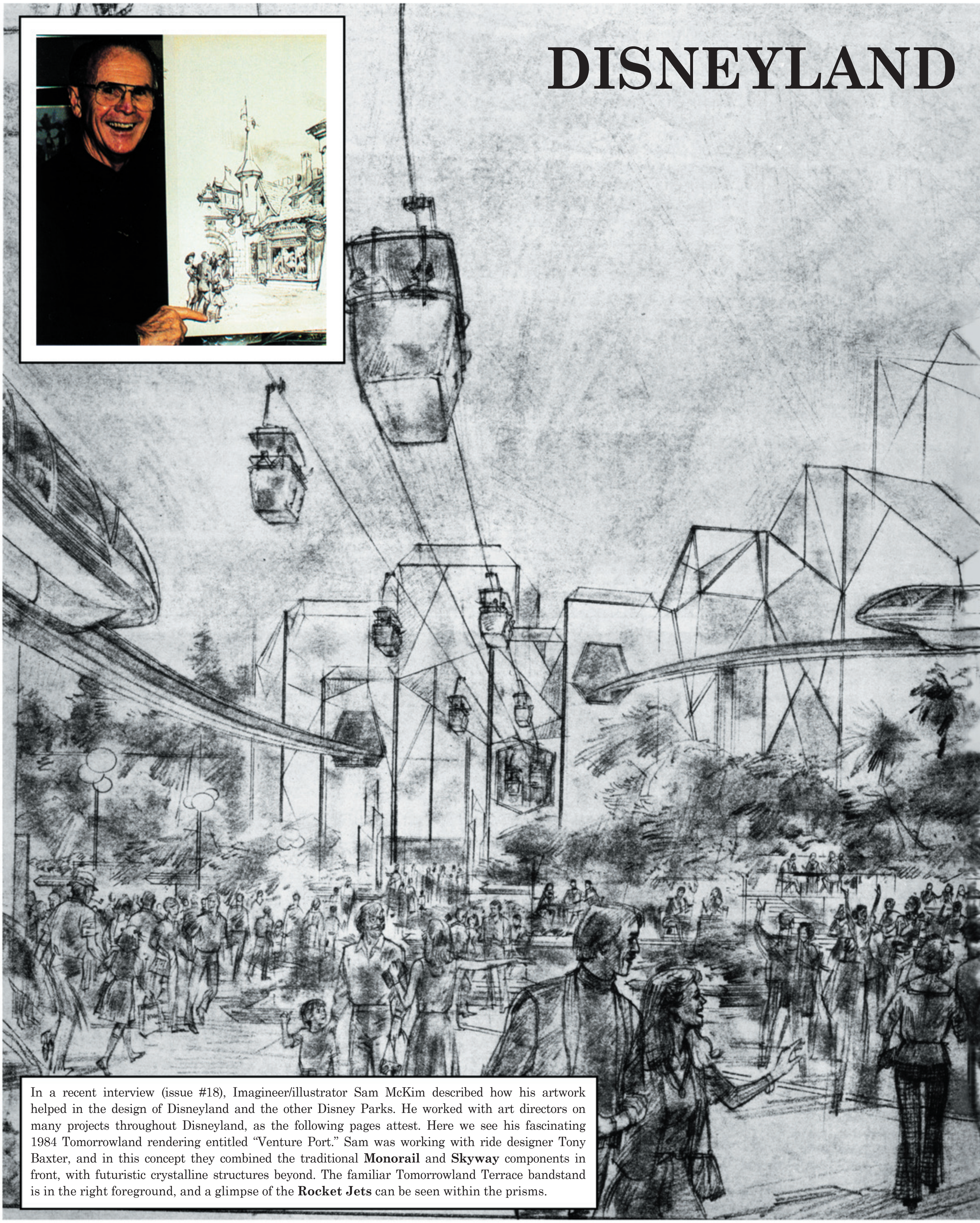
WALT DISNEY'S TOMORROWLAND



DISNEYLAND



In a recent interview (issue #18), Imagineer/illustrator Sam McKim described how his artwork helped in the design of Disneyland and the other Disney Parks. He worked with art directors on many projects throughout Disneyland, as the following pages attest. Here we see his fascinating 1984 Tomorrowland rendering entitled "Venture Port." Sam was working with ride designer Tony Baxter, and in this concept they combined the traditional **Monorail** and **Skyway** components in front, with futuristic crystalline structures beyond. The familiar Tomorrowland Terrace bandstand is in the right foreground, and a glimpse of the **Rocket Jets** can be seen within the prisms.

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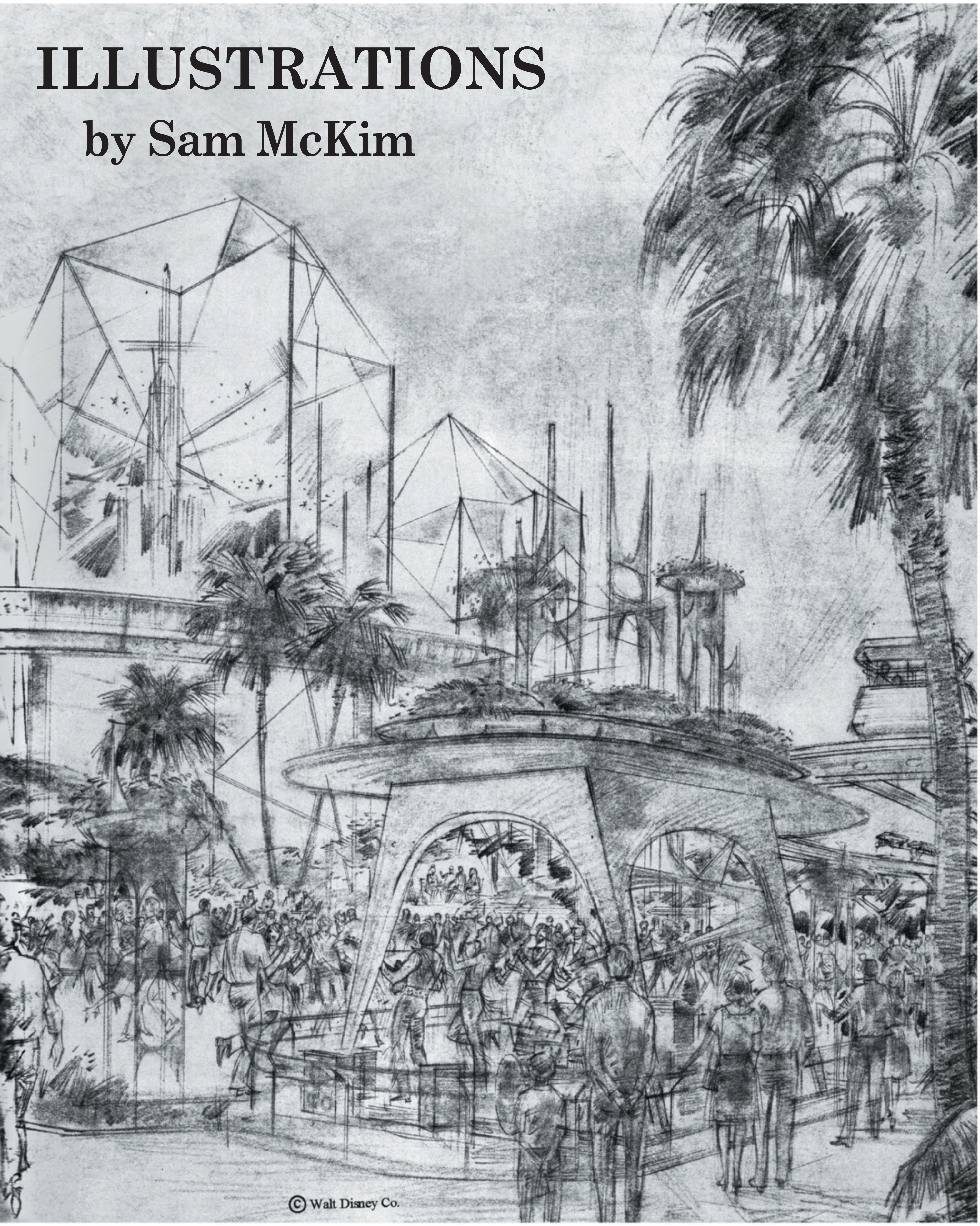
ILLUSTRATIONS

by Sam McKim



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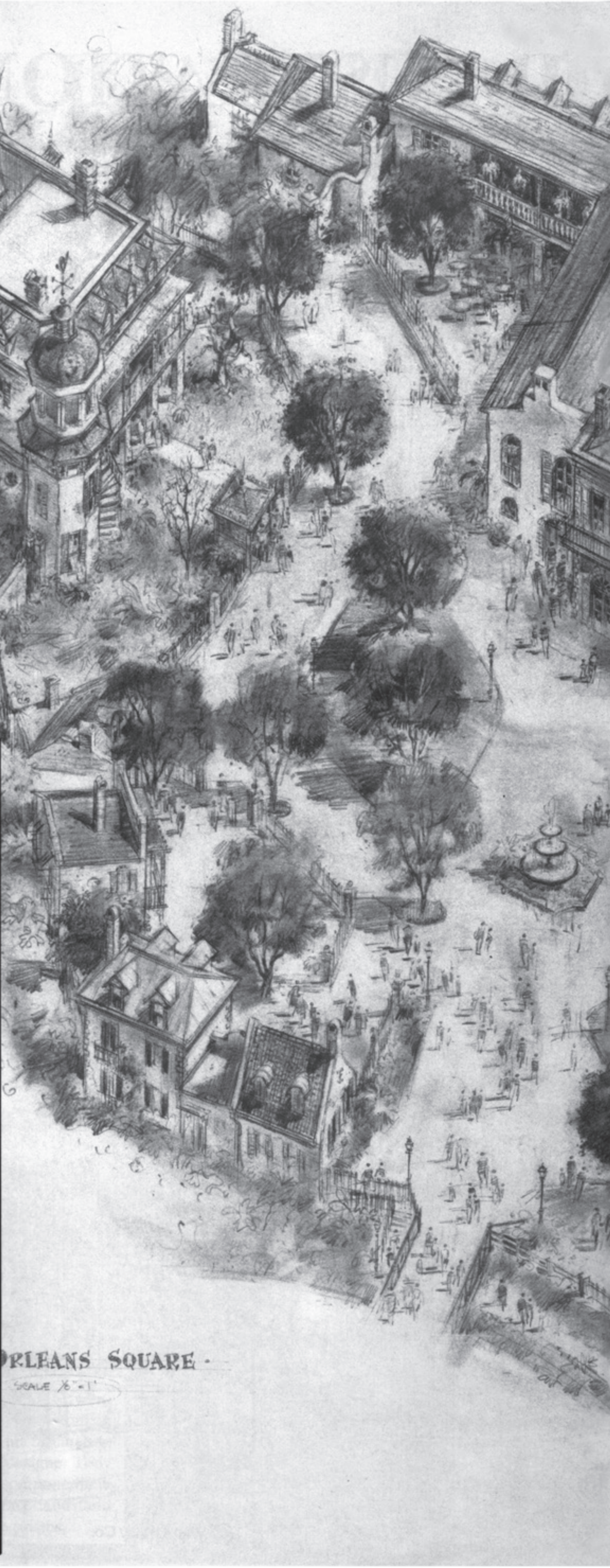
RLEANS SQUARE
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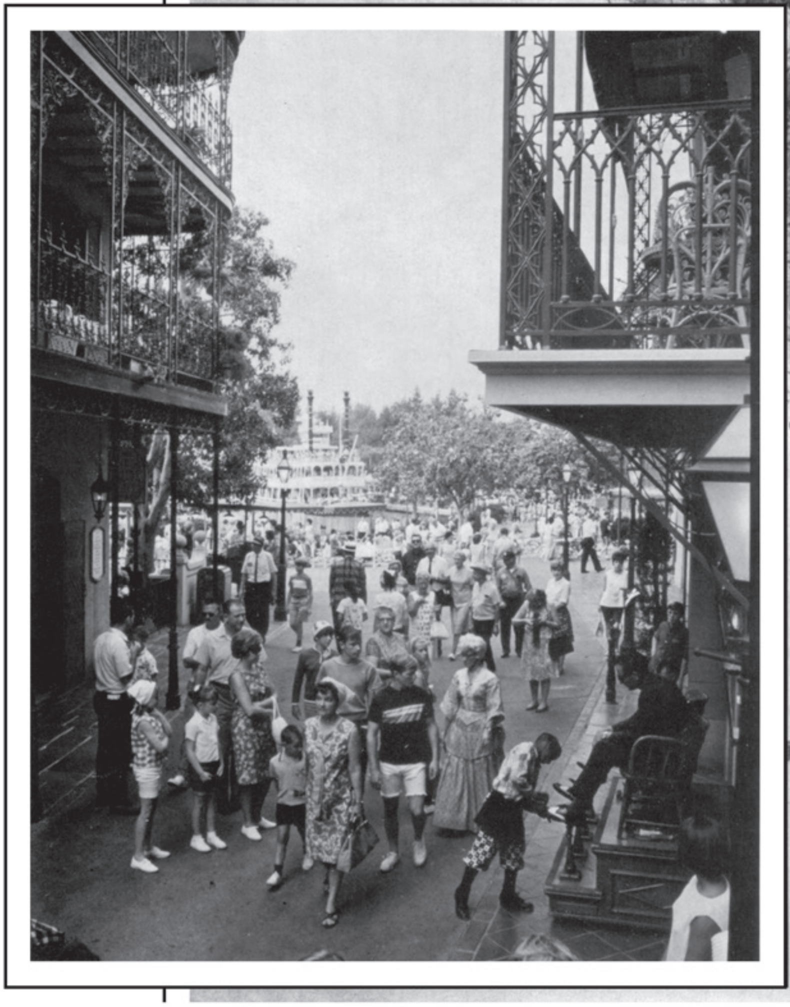
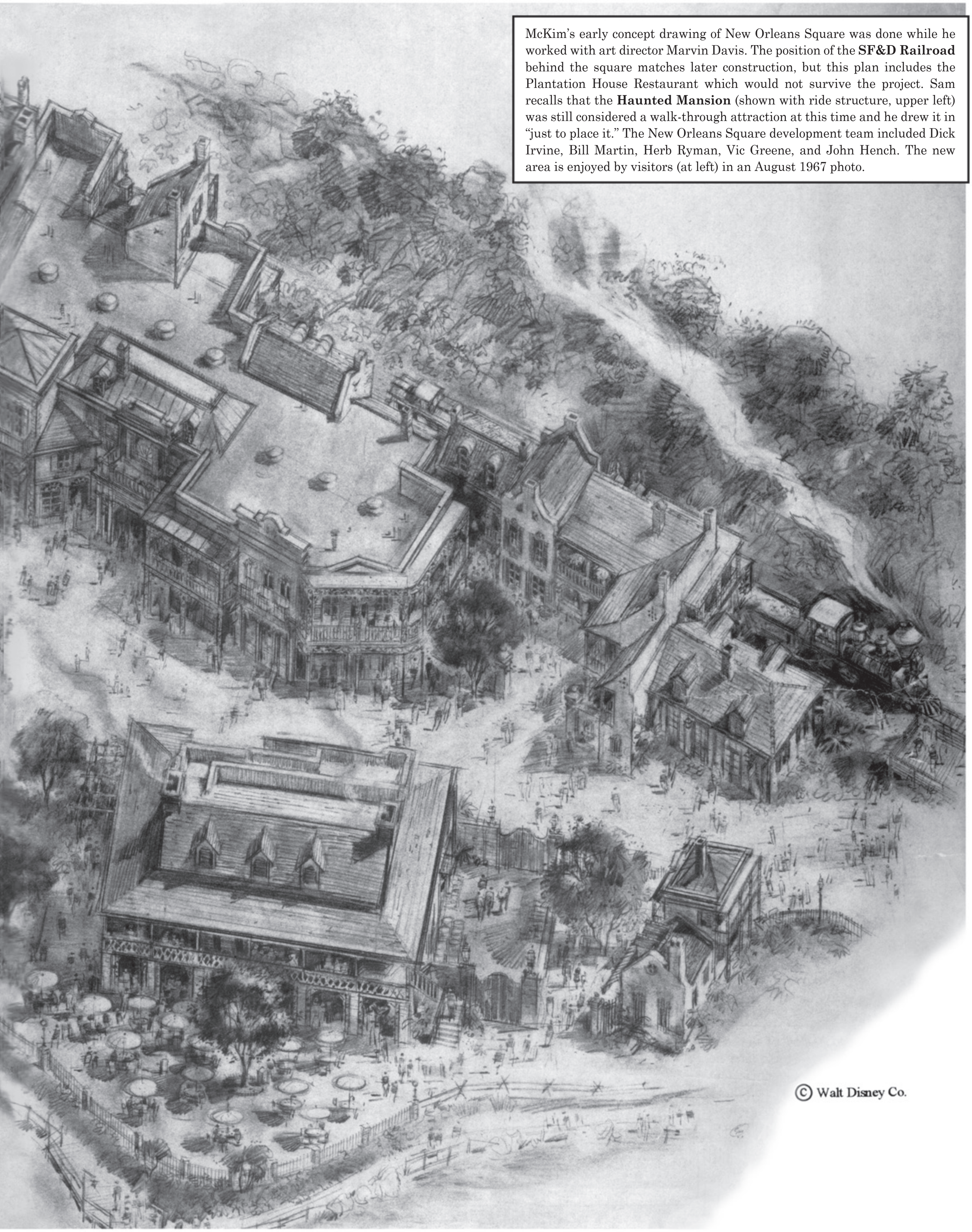


McKim's early concept drawing of New Orleans Square was done while he worked with art director Marvin Davis. The position of the **SF&D Railroad** behind the square matches later construction, but this plan includes the Plantation House Restaurant which would not survive the project. Sam recalls that the **Haunted Mansion** (shown with ride structure, upper left) was still considered a walk-through attraction at this time and he drew it in "just to place it." The New Orleans Square development team included Dick Irvine, Bill Martin, Herb Ryman, Vic Greene, and John Hench. The new area is enjoyed by visitors (at left) in an August 1967 photo.



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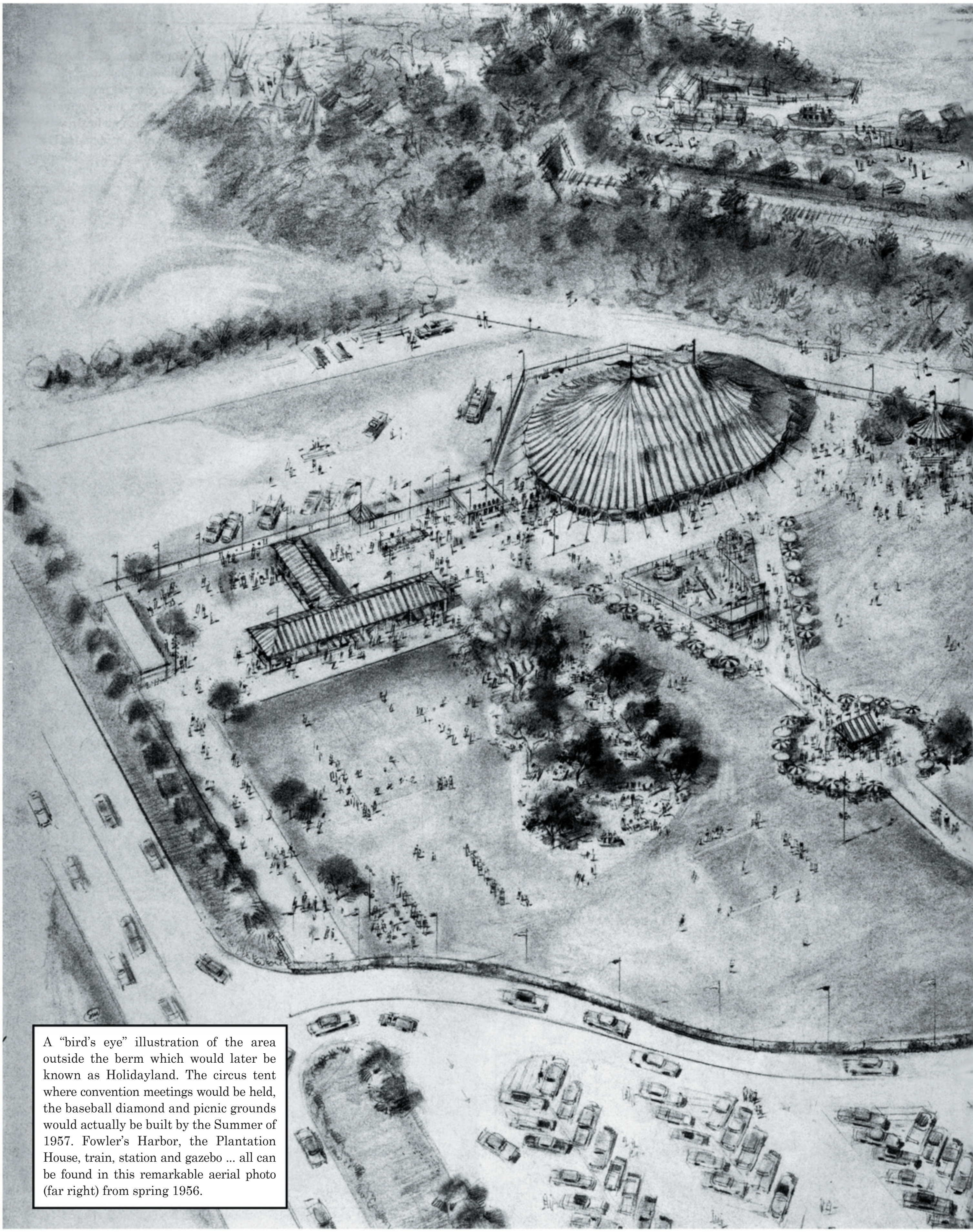
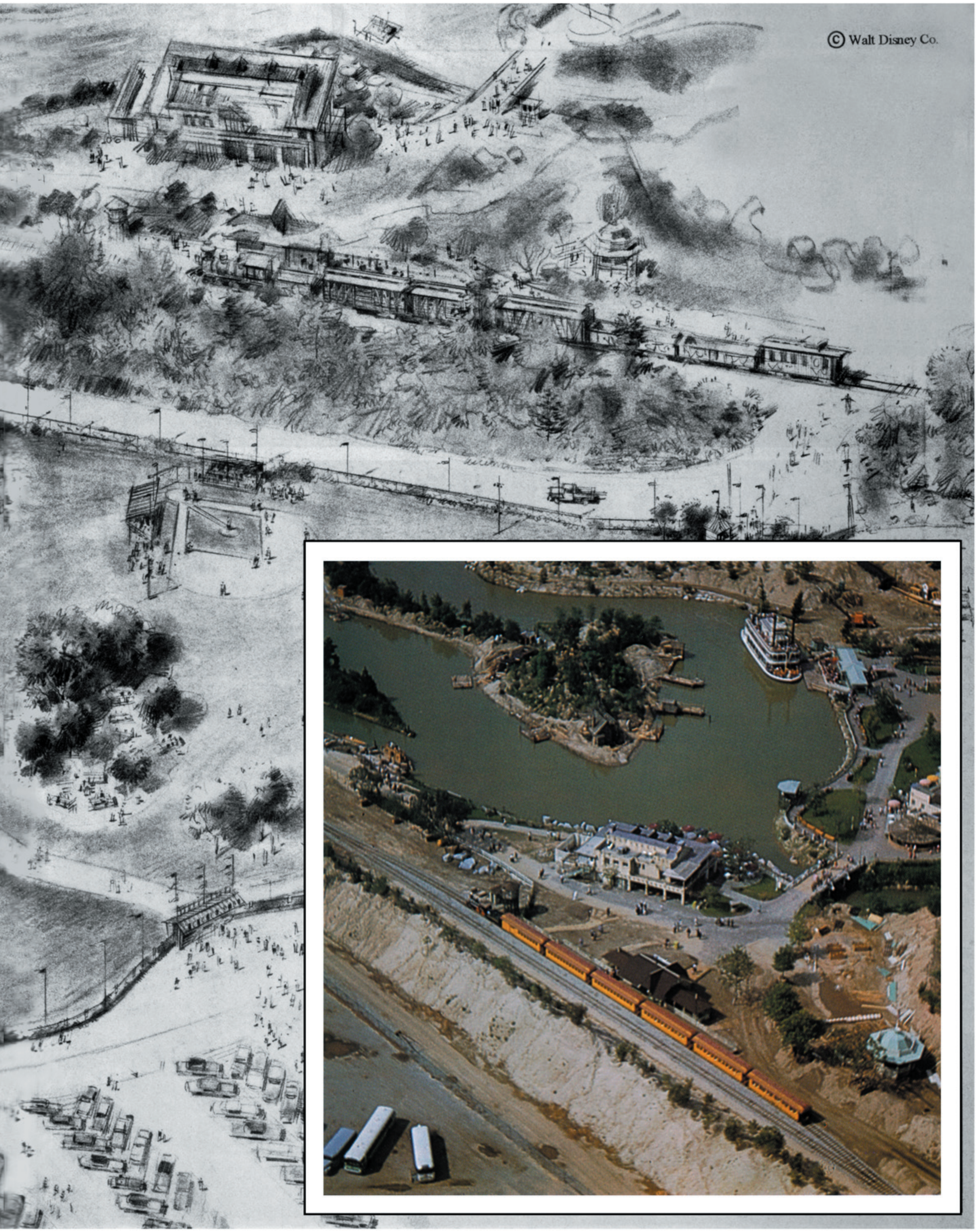


A "bird's eye" illustration of the area outside the berm which would later be known as Holidayland. The circus tent where convention meetings would be held, the baseball diamond and picnic grounds would actually be built by the Summer of 1957. Fowler's Harbor, the Plantation House, train, station and gazebo ... all can be found in this remarkable aerial photo (far right) from spring 1956.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Three of McKim's illustrations for the Friendly Indian Village along the Rivers of America. His familiarity with the western theme is apparent in these 1956 sketches done while working with Frontierland art director Vic Greene.

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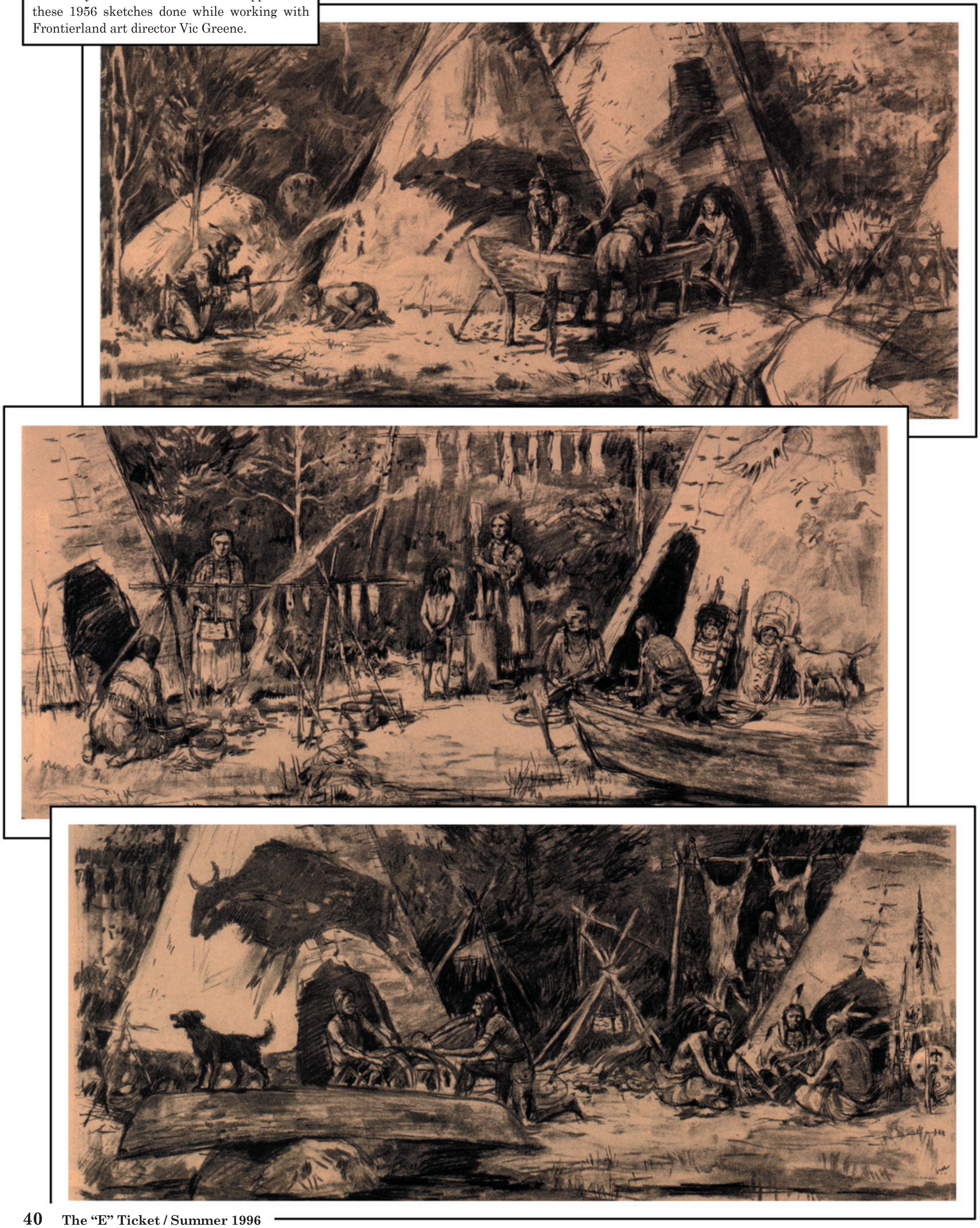

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MAIN STREET MAIL BOX

"I especially enjoyed the interview with Bill Evans. Having been to Disneyland many times since the 50's, I noticed the difference in the feel of the different lands, but have to admit, I had always taken the landscaping for granted. You have really opened my eyes! Also loved the articles on Adventureland, especially the Treehouse. Thanks for caring about Disneyland, and Walt, and all the things he stood for, the way you do." - G.G.C., Roseburg, OR

"What a wonderful interview with Bill Evans, on Disney landscaping. It's one of the main items that makes Disneyland so unique. Bill and Jack Evans' first contact with Walt was especially enjoyable to read. I loved every photo and drawing in the Swiss Family Treehouse article. Bill Martin's concept sketch was a special treat. When I first pulled #23 out of the envelope, it didn't FEEL like The 'E' Ticket but the slick paper and full color brought out the artwork very well. I especially liked the bamboo lettering - nice touch!" - J.E., Vancouver, WA

"What a major treat it was to receive issue #23 after a miserable, record-breaking week of snow! Bill Evans seems like a man who genuinely loves his work (as all of the Disney folks seem to) and I don't think I'll ever visit any of the Disney Parks again without giving thought to the foliage and landscaping that has truly been expertly designed. The Jungle Cruise has long been one of my favorites. It was very interesting to learn of the changes it went through (i.e. Marc Davis's brilliant designs!) and as for the Treehouse article, I'm still imagining the labor involved in 300,000 hand-made leaves." - B.Z., Norfolk, MA

"Along with the color photos, the new cover really gives the magazine a professional appearance. As usual, the content was first rate. The Swiss Family Treehouse and Jungle Cruise articles were the perfect accompaniment to the interview with Bill Evans. I particularly enjoyed the comparisons between the Disneyland and Walt Disney World versions of these attractions. Keep it up, especially the Wings Over Disneyland photos." - W.R., York, PA

"Once again, without hesitation and with pleasure, I am renewing my subscription to your magazine. While the quality of your printing and photography becomes more sophisticated, your style of writing retains its personal, one-on-one feeling. This is not unlike the Park itself. Although it is expanding and becoming more technologically advanced, it still exudes that famous personally comfortable atmosphere. The Swiss Family Treehouse article raised a question. In the 1960 film, the ship was called the 'Titus,' as in your article, but a wooden plaque in front of the attraction (apparently erected by Father himself) refers to the 'ill-fated ship Recovery.' We have a difference of opinion." - B.C.S., Dublin, CA

...we were there, Brian, but we missed that part of the sign. The folks at the Walt Disney Archives tell us that the Imagineers did use the name "Titus" for the original Treehouse in 1962. In 1981, the ship was renamed "Recovery" for the Walt Disney World version and now that's the name of the ship at Disneyland, too...

"Adventureland is often taken for granted, especially the Swiss Family Treehouse. I rarely read any information on this overlooked yet enjoyable attraction. I do wish you had devoted a little more coverage to the Jungle Cruise (specific scenes and characters along the route, changes through the years, more photos, boat steering methods, a layout map of the ride) but overall another outstanding issue. By the way, please clue us in on the location of the railroad tracks in the Bill Evans article (page 13). I would guess that it is one of the abandoned tracks from the Nature's Wonderland Mine Train near the Rivers of America in Frontierland, but I'm not really sure." - J.H., Manhattan Beach, CA

...your guess is close, Joseph, and that's what we were thinking when we wrote the caption question on page 12. We've since been informed by several expert Disneyland historians (you know who you are...) that the tracks, tunnel and balancing rocks in that photo were part of the "natural arch bridge" area in the Mine Train Ride. That scene is NOT still in Disneyland today...

"In this new issue, it was interesting to see the picture from above (Wings Over Disneyland) that showed the driveway behind Main Street, by the Jungle Cruise. You would never know an alley was back there." - P.M., North Hollywood, CA

"My friends and I often comment that we'd love to visit the '1950's Disneyland' or 'classic Tomorrowland' and your efforts offer a glimpse at what that would be like. Your interview with Tony Baxter brought tears to my eyes." - G.K., Bothell, WA

"I've been a Disney fan for decades. I was delighted to finally learn about Edison Square (Issue #22). I had an old souvenir map from a trip to Disneyland when I was about 8 years old, almost 34 years ago. It had Edison Square as a 'coming attraction' and now the mystery is solved. Great magazine!" - B.D., Cincinnati, OH

"I was happy to see your inclusion of a look at the new generation of attraction designers, starting with the interview with Tony Baxter (Issue #22). I feel that this was one of your best articles and I would encourage you to continue further interviews with the second generation Disney Imagineers. There is more to the Disney concept than just those projects Walt personally worked on. I believe it is this concept that so many of us identify with and love, and as such deserves further thought and discussion in your fine publication." - M.J.S., San Francisco, CA

"Nice tie-in of Edison Square with the Carousel of Progress, but I really thought that the Tony Baxter article was fantastic. It was great to get a different perspective on Disneyland from an Imagineer who started in the 70's, and his insight on how Disney tackles new projects. Ever think of putting The 'E' Ticket (www.the-e-ticket.com) on the net? I want my 'E' t.v." - G.D., Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada

"As a new subscriber, I'm hooked! This is my second order of back issues. One thing remains consistent as I read your earlier issues - The 'E' Ticket always delivers a thoughtful and entertaining read." - D.N., Wilton, CT

"Would like to see an article on the TWA Moonliner, the building of the Matterhorn, and how the Man In Space episodes played in the development of Tomorrowland area." - S.M., Mays Landing, NJ ... "Mission to the Moon/Mars stuff, please." - R.B., Long Beach, CA

...how's this "moon ride" issue, Stephen and Robert?...

"Only one comment so far, as I've never seen your magazine and have only just heard of you. Why don't you advertise yourself better, buy the Disney Store mailing lists or run ads in the Disney magazine? Now I may never get all the back issues, but it will be fun to try." - J.T., Richmond, CA

"It is such a treat to see the early photos of Disneyland. I've often tried to explain to friends and family what the attractions of yesteryear were like and how others have changed in appearance. Now I have the pictures to show them! My only complaint is that I hadn't heard of The 'E' Ticket sooner. I anxiously await receiving these back issues. I learned of your publication on the web through 'Yesterland' by Werner Weiss. Due to the great review that he gave you, I decided to subscribe and am I ever glad I did!" - D.E., Woodside, CA

"I hope the cost of the new color photos is not putting a financial strain on The 'E' Ticket. I have always had a love for Disneyland, and the concept of a place where all the people from all over the world can enjoy themselves. Your magazine lets me remember that there still is such a place." - J.G., Glendale, CA

"Although I've only been to Disneyland once, your magazine brings back memories of my childhood and helps me to better understand Mr. Disney and his dream." - T.A., Marietta, GA

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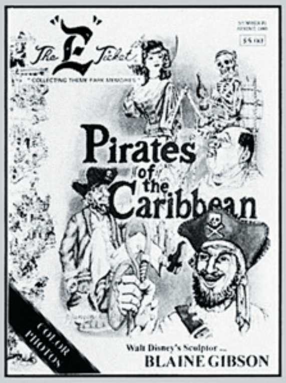
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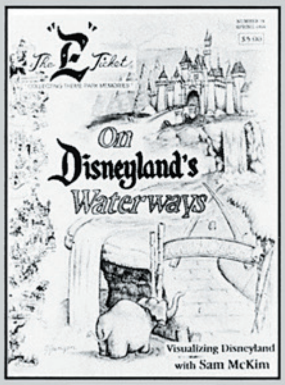
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KEN ANDERSON

ISSUE #13

We're down to only a few left of these early issues. While the supply lasts, we're offering them at a collector's premium of $10. This may be the last chance to fill in your collection, so don't wait!

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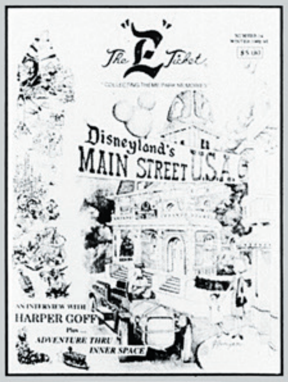
Disneyland's Mark Twain
WALLY BOAG
tells of Frontierland

ISSUE #15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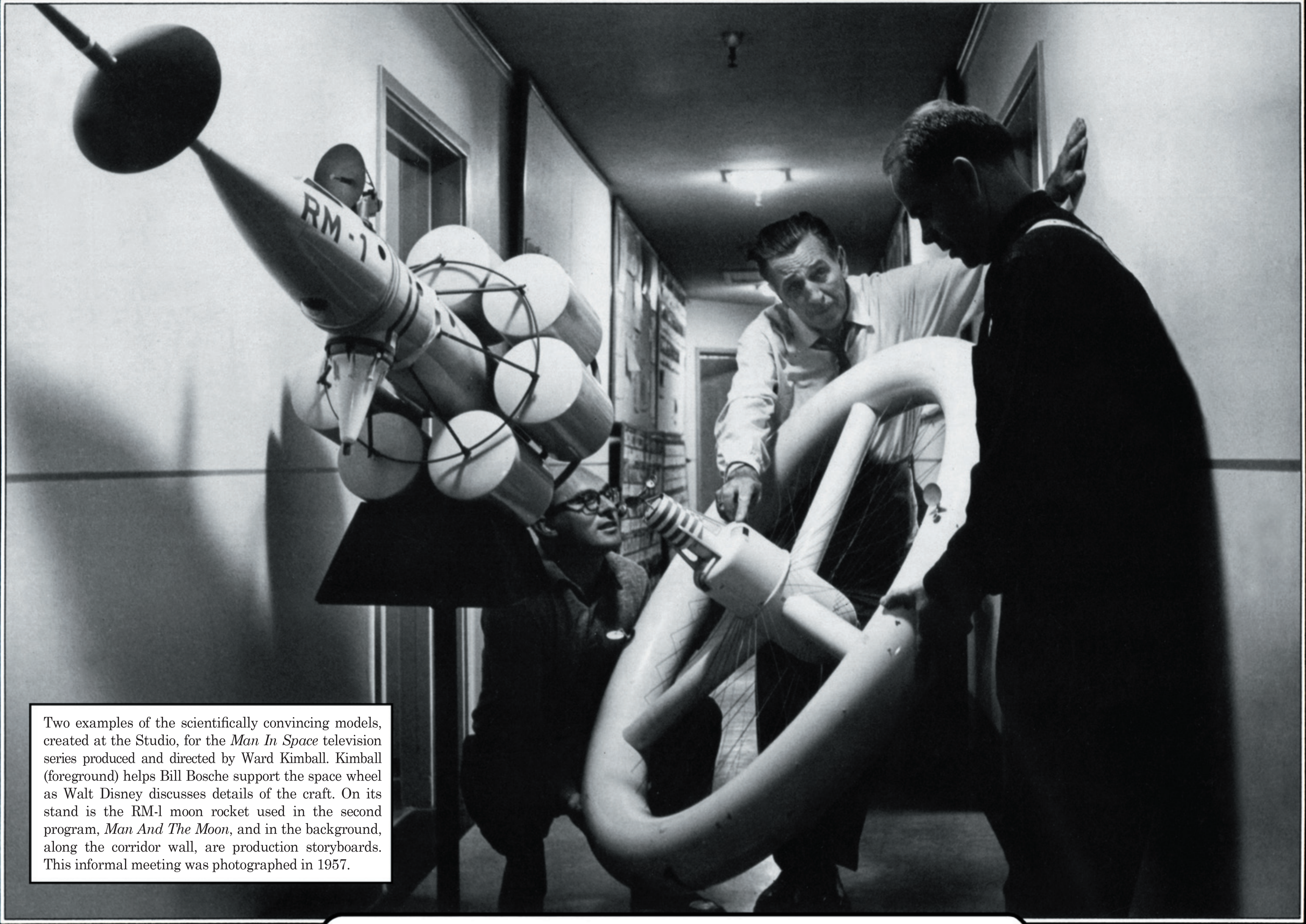

Two examples of the scientifically convincing models, created at the Studio, for the *Man In Space* television series produced and directed by Ward Kimball. Kimball (foreground) helps Bill Bosche support the space wheel as Walt Disney discusses details of the craft. On its stand is the RM-l moon rocket used in the second program, *Man And The Moon*, and in the background, along the corridor wall, are production storyboards. This informal meeting was photographed in 1957.